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DUNGEON

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Leader of the Pack

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 4-6

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Introduction

Three years ago, a young idealist named Ulmar Lightborn left the town of Silvergrail with several human and dwarf companions in search of adventure. His younger brother, Zelgar, stayed behind to serve as Silvergrail's cleric. While the would-be heroes were chasing their first big quest, they were hunted by a cunning werewolf. The werewolf grievously wounded Ulmar and killed all his companions before dying on Ulmar's sword. Infected with lycanthropy, Ulmar spread the curse to others and soon became the leader of his own pack.

Despite his affliction, Ulmar still cares deeply for his brother, and now he has decided to return to Silvergrail and begin a plan to bring Zelgar into the fold. If the cleric can be turned to lycanthropy, then the rest of the townspeople will be easily dealt with as well.

"Leader of the Pack" is a Dungeons & Dragons® adventure for characters of levels 4-6. When Ulmar Lightborn threatens the town of Silvergrail, the

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characters are called upon to escort Zelgar to a nearby farmhouse to confront his werewolf brother. There, one way or another, Zelgar intends to put an end to Ulmar's evil curse.

Adventure Background

This adventure revolves around two brothers whose parents were killed by brigands. The firstborn son, Ulmar, became an adventurer. His younger brother, Zelgar, joined the local clergy and became Silvergrail's dutiful priest of Pelor and Erathis.

Early in his adventuring career, Ulmar was bitten by a werewolf and has been cursed with lycanthropy for almost three years. Ulmar longs to reunite with his estranged brother and turn Zelgar into a shapechanger as well.

About a month ago, Ulmar returned home and boldly confronted Zelgar during a packed sermon in Silvergrail's temple. Ulmar urged his brother to abandon the gods and "embrace the moon," and when Zelgar refused, Ulmar flew into a rage and presented him with a dire ultimatum before the horrified congregation. He would terrorize Silvergrail and the countryside until Zelgar capitulated to his demands.

The locals were quick to rally around their priest, but Ulmar fled before they could bring arms against him. Soon thereafter, determined to turn his brother into a werewolf and bring him into the pack, Ulmar began attacking outlying farms to pressure Zelgar to come out of hiding and confront him. Now the people of Silvergrail fear that any night, Ulmar and his wolves will slip into town to continue their evil work.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure takes place in and around Silvergrail in early winter. There are several ways in which the adventurers might be drawn into the story (see "Adventure Hooks" below), or you can devise some other hook. The town can be renamed and the season modified to best suit your campaign.

As the adventure opens, the heroes know about the threat posed by Ulmar Lightborn and his werewolf allies. The locals are unwilling to yield to Ulmar's demands and relinquish his brother, their beloved priest. Fearing for the safety of the townsfolk, Zelgar asks the heroes to patrol the town streets outside the temple at night (Event 1). The priest suspects that his brother might have spies in town—townsfolk whom Ulmar has infected with lycanthropy. Zelgar hopes that he can cure Ulmar's lycanthropy with a Remove Affliction ritual, but he realizes that it might be too late to save Ulmar—in which case he's prepared to kill his brother to end the threat to Silvergrail.

Zelgar accompanies the adventurers as they follow a lead concerning Ulmar's whereabouts. Along the way, they come across roving members of Ulmar's pack (Event 2). When they finally reach the abandoned farmhouse that serves as Ulmar's lair, they find a small group of prisoners entrusted to a band of gnolls that have sworn allegiance to the werewolves (Event 3). After defeating the gnolls, Zelgar and the heroes wait for Ulmar to return to the farmhouse. When Ulmar appears and scornfully refuses to submit to his brother's Remove Affliction ritual, Zelgar and the heroes are forced to take extreme action, perhaps with tragic consequences (Event 4).

Once Ulmar is defeated and the heroes return to Silvergrail, the conclusion or possible continuation of the adventure depends on how well they protected Zelgar and whether you want to develop Silvergrail further or push the adventurers toward some other destination.

Silvergrail

Silvergrail is a prosperous if remote town nestled among sparse forests and along a weathered trade road.

A few of Silvergrail's original human settlers still live in town along with their descendants, most of whom are farmers. Dwarves from secluded clan-holds in the surrounding hills account for one-quarter of the population, and many of them are artisans and traders.

Population: 1,200 (50% humans, 25% dwarves, 10% half-elves, 10% halflings, 5% other races).

Temples: Bright House is the only full-fledged temple in Silvergrail. It sits in the center of town and is dedicated equally to Pelor (god of the sun) and Erathis (god of civilization). Most locals are devout followers of one or both of these deities, and the words of the temple's priest, Zelgar Lightborn, carry tremendous weight with the local sheriff.

Elsewhere in town stands a modest shrine to Moradin (god of creation and the forge). Beneath a carved stone dome rests a white marble altar shaped like an anvil. Many of the town's resident dwarves make prayers and leave offerings here.

Government: The sheriff of Silvergrail is a seasoned dwarf named Zirka Havenstone. She has held the post since the town's founding some fifty years ago and maintains a garrison of about twenty guards. Zirka answers to a distant authority (a king or other great figure, as dictated by the needs of your campaign). Although she knows better than to interfere in spiritual matters, she has great sympathy for Zelgar's current predicament. However, given a chance, she would kill the cleric's werewolf brother to protect the town. The symbol of her office is a battered silver grail that rests atop a pedestal in the upper floor of the local barracks.

The Silver Grail: The silver grail in Zirka's care was given to the town's original settlers by their friendly neighbors, the Havenstone clan of dwarves.

The town is named after the chalice, which has a Dwarven phrase etched into its rim: "Prosperity borne out of friendship." The chalice is exquisitely crafted but nonmagical.

Adventure Hooks

The adventurers might find their way to Zelgar by one of several means. Several possible adventure hooks are presented below.

For Erathis and Pelor: While enjoying some downtime in a distant town or city, the adventurers are approached by a cleric of Erathis, Pelor, or both. The cleric has received a disturbing report from Zelgar Lightborn and hires the adventurers to travel to Silvergrail and assist the young priest any way they can.

Thick as Dwarves: Rumors of werewolves haunting the outskirts of Silvergrail prompt merchants to hire adventurers as bodyguards. Not long after they escort a dwarf merchant to Silvergrail without incident, the adventurers are approached by the merchant's longtime friend, Sheriff Havenstone. She informs them of the situation in Silvergrail and introduces them to Zelgar Lightborn.

Word on the Roads: While travelling, the adventurers hear word from several passersby that the Sheriff of Silvergrail is putting out an extensive call to adventurers to help with a situation of dire importance. When the adventurers reach Silvergrail, they are stopped at the gates. Upon mentioning their purpose to the town guards and proving they are well-meaning adventurers, they are let in and led straight to Sheriff Havenstone. After apprising them of the situation, she takes them to meet Zelgar Lightborn.

Shelter from the Storm: The adventurers take up lodging in Silvergrail to escape a winter storm. The guards at the gate, wary of disguised lycanthropes entering the town, question the heroes before allowing them in. Sheriff Havenstone, who happens to be nearby, overhears the adventurers and approaches them with an offer to help protect the town priest, Zelgar Lightborn, from his cursed brother.

Zelgar Lightborn

Zelgar is a 24-year-old human who is well liked and well respected in town for good reason: He's a sensible, likable guy. As Sheriff Havenstone is fond of saying, "That boy doesn't have a mean stone in his body." At Havenstone's insistence, Zelgar has been confined to the temple (which also contains his private quarters). The sheriff has two watchful guards standing in front of the temple at all hours and regular patrols circling the block.

Although healthy of build and good-looking, Zelgar puts on no airs. He serves Erathis and Pelor dutifully and gives of his time selflessly, placing the concerns of the town above his own. He has a cordial, easygoing manner and doesn't like to burden people with his own problems. He's never snide or condescending, but he quietly loses respect for those who exhibit morally questionable motivations and actions.

Zelgar loves his older brother very much, which makes the current situation all the more tragic. He knows that Ulmar won't be frightened off by threats or shows of force. He also believes that if his brother's curse cannot be lifted, then Ulmar must die—it's the only other way to protect the town.

When he first meets the adventurers, Zelgar says, "You look like you can handle yourselves in a fight, but let me warn you: Ulmar was once like you. He was an adventurer. He still thinks like one. Cornering him will not be easy."

When the time comes for the adventurers to hunt down his brother, Zelgar insists on joining them as bait to lure Ulmar out of hiding. His brother's too smart to be drawn into a face-to-face confrontation otherwise. If the heroes object, Zelgar assures them that he can handle himself in a fight and can also provide healing. Sheriff Havenstone objects to Zelgar's involvement, but the cleric refuses to sit by while townsfolk are slaughtered.

As a priest of Erathis and Pelor, Zelgar knows the following rituals: Cure Disease, Gentle Repose, Remove Affliction, and Speak with Dead. However, Zelgar only has enough gold in the temple coffers to perform Remove Affliction once—on his brother, preferably—and Speak with Dead once. He can use the latter ritual on a slain werewolf to ascertain his evil brother's whereabouts.

Before they can confront Ulmar, the adventurers must find him. Zelgar believes that Ulmar has spies in the town—werewolves in human form—probing its defenses. The young priest urges the adventurers to uncover these spies and question them about Ulmar's whereabouts. If the characters agree to search for spies, Zelgar directs them to Sheriff Havenstone, who drafts them into her militia and assigns them to patrol duty.

If the characters have follow-up questions for Zelgar, he tries his best to answer them while stressing that time is short; they must begin their patrol immediately if they're to find Ulmar's spies. He also informs the adventurers that if members of Ulmar's pack are not forthcoming with information, he can use Speak with Dead on one of their corpses.

If characters press for a reward, Sheriff Havenstone can promise them 1,500 gp for protecting Zelgar as he confronts his brother. Half of the money comes from the town's bank; the other half Zirka pulls from her own private fortune (the Havenstone clan owns a lucrative silver mine in the nearby hills).

Zelgar Lightborn	**Level 5 Leader**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP –
HP 47; **Bloodied** 23; **Healing Surges** 9; **Surge Value** 11	**Initiative** +3
AC 20, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 20	**Perception** +6
Speed 5	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ **Morningstar** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage.	
Sacred Flame (implement, radiant) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d6 + 7 radiant damage, and one ally Zelgar can see chooses either to gain 5 temporary hit points or to make a saving throw.	
Radiant Sanctuary (implement, radiant) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 5 (enemies in the burst); +9 vs. Will	
Hit: 1d8 + 7 radiant damage.	
Effect: Each ally in the burst gains a +2 power bonus to AC until the end of Zelgar's next turn.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Healing Word (healing) ✦ **2/Encounter**	
Attack: Close burst 5. Zelgar or one ally in the burst can spend a healing surge and gain 1d6 additional hit points.	
Skills Heal +11, Religion +9	
Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 18 (+6)	
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 17 (+5)	
Alignment lawful good **Languages** Common	
Equipment chainmail, morningstar, holy symbol	

Playing Zelgar

It's best if you run Zelgar yourself, roleplaying him and using him in combat as a companion character who aids the heroes. As an NPC companion, the cleric is entitled to an equal share of any XP awarded for an encounter in which he's an active participant.

You can ask a player to run Zelgar in combat if you prefer, but it's important that you have some control over the cleric's fate (so that he survives to face Ulmar in the final encounter). In the first three events, Zelgar tries to stay out of harm's way and avoid enemies' attacks. He heals his allies using *healing word*, stabilizes dying allies with Heal checks, and contributes an attack or two if the situation is dire. When facing his brother in Event 4, Zelgar is definitely an active participant (as described in that section).

Quests

After meeting with Zelgar, the adventurers gain the following quests.

MAJOR QUEST: PROTECT ZELGAR

5th-Level Major Quest (1,000 XP)

The characters complete this quest if Zelgar survives the adventure without contracting lycanthropy from his brother (he contracts the disease automatically if he is bloodied by Ulmar or bitten by Ulmar while he is bloodied).

In addition to the XP award, the adventurers receive a monetary reward of 750 gp for completing this quest.

If the characters were gracious and noble in their dealings with the town, Sheriff Havenstone also gives them a letter of recommendation that will serve them well in any future dealings with dwarves, in particular members of the Havenstone clan.

MAJOR QUEST: SAVE ULMAR

5th-Level Major Quest (1,000 XP)

The characters complete this quest if Ulmar survives the adventure and his curse is lifted.

In addition to the XP award, Zelgar throws in one *potion of healing* per character. The adventurers also earn the brothers' gratitude and friendship.

Events

The following events are meant to occur in order. See "Adventure Synopsis" (page 2) for an overview of how these events are likely to play out, and modify them as needed to suit your campaign.

Event 1: Cold-Blooded Killers

Combat Encounter Level 6 (1,350 XP)

This encounter takes place after the adventurers have spent a long winter's night spent patrolling the streets of Silvergrail. All is quiet outside. Secure in the temple, Zelgar has a nightmare in which Ulmar eviscerates the heroes. Upon waking, he decides to check on them. By doing so, he's unknowingly putting himself in harm's way.

Members of Ulmar's pack have crept into Silvergrail in the dead of night, looking to spy on the temple and make sure Zelgar (whom they refer to as "the coward") doesn't try to sneak out of town. When they catch sight of Zelgar in the street, they decide to attack in the hope of infecting him with their curse.

Light: Dim light (moonlight).

Monsters: 2 frenzied werewolves (F), 2 dire wolves (W), 9 mooncrazed peasants (P), 2+ Silvergrail guards (G), Zelgar (Z).

As the characters conduct their patrol, read:

The glow of the full moon and the light falling snow create an eerie atmosphere during your midnight patrol. The cold silence only intensifies the sleepless dread.

Footsteps presage the arrival of three men—Zelgar and two of the sheriff's dwarf guards. The priest rubs his palms together to keep his hands warm. "Is everything all right?" he asks.

P
P
P
P
W
F
G
G
Z
Start Area
F
W
P
P
P
P
P

If the adventurers ask Zelgar why he left the safety of the temple, he admits that he had a nightmare in which his brother stalked and eviscerated the characters. Zelgar wanted to make sure they were all right.

As the guards begin to lead Zelgar back toward the temple, each character can make a Perception check. Characters who roll at least a 15 can take a single action now, during the surprise round.

Perception DC 15: The character hears footsteps in a nearby alley.

Perception DC 22: The character sees fleeting shadows on the nearby rooftops.

After the Perception checks are made, read:
A haggard woman stumbles out of a nearby alley, clutching her chest. Her face and hands are streaked with blood. She crumples to the ground and writhes in agony, calling out, "Zelgar! Zelgar, help me, I've been attacked!"

The woman is Clarissa Myles, a frenzied werewolf in human form, and her wounds are superficial and self-inflicted. A DC 22 Insight check enables a character to sense the insincerity and trickery in the tone of voice. Her werewolf companion, Ernest Torvan, is hiding in the shadows on a nearby rooftop, waiting to leap down and attack. The dire wolves spring out of dark alleys on either side of the heroes, each one followed closely by a pack of evil peasants allied with Ulmar. The peasants are "werewolf wannabes" afflicted with a form of moon frenzy—a condition they eagerly embrace.

Unless stopped by the characters, Zelgar moves toward the woman and kneels down to investigate her wounds. If this happens, the woman's eyes shine like glass as she leans forward and shrieks, "The brother returns tonight!" She pulls Zelgar down and attacks him as her allies come out of hiding to confront the characters and town guards.

If the characters attack first or recognize the trap, they gain surprise but can initially see only monsters whose Stealth checks are lower than the characters' passive Perception scores.

2 Frenzied Werewolves (F) — **Level 6 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human — XP 250 each

HP 78; **Bloodied** 39 — **Initiative** +6
AC 18, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16 — **Perception** +9
Speed 6 (8 in wolf form) — Low-light vision

Traits

Regeneration
The werewolf regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the werewolf takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, or 2d8 + 8 against a bloodied target, and the target falls prone.

Bite (disease) **✦ At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts werewolf moon frenzy (stage 1).

Club (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, or 2d8 + 9 against a bloodied target.

Lycanthrope Fury ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The werewolf must be in hybrid form.
Effect: The werewolf uses *claw* and *bite*. Then the werewolf takes 5 damage.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) **✦ At-Will**
Effect: The werewolf alters its physical form to appear as a Medium wolf, a unique human, or a hybrid.

Skills Bluff +8, Intimidate +8

Str 19 (+7)	**Dex** 17 (+6)	**Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 18 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+3)	**Cha** 11 (+3)

Alignment evil — **Languages** Common
Equipment club

Werewolf Moon Frenzy — **Level 6 Disease**
This disease starts with a fever, which soon becomes a violent and unpredictable rage.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a -2 penalty to Will.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, whenever the target becomes bloodied, it makes a melee basic attack as a free action against an ally adjacent to it.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, whenever the target is hit by an attack, it makes a melee basic attack as a free action against an ally adjacent to it.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
10 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
11-14: No change.
15 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

2 Dire Wolves (W) — **Level 5 Skirmisher**
Large natural beast (mount) — XP 200 each

HP 67; **Bloodied** 33 — **Initiative** +7
AC 19, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16 — **Perception** +9
Speed 8 — Low-light vision

Traits

Pack Harrier
The wolf has combat advantage against any enemy that is adjacent to two or more of the wolf's allies.

Pack Hunter (mount)
The wolf's rider has combat advantage against any enemy that is adjacent to one of the rider's allies other than the wolf.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, or 3d8 + 4 against a prone target. The target falls prone if the wolf has combat advantage against it.

Str 19 (+6)	**Dex** 16 (+5)	**Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 19 (+6)	**Int** 5 (-1)	**Cha** 11 (+2)

Alignment unaligned — **Languages** –

9 Mooncrazed Peasants (P) **Level 5 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 50 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +6
AC 19, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16 **Perception** +2
Speed 6

Standard Actions

⊕ **Wounding Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 4 damage. If the peasant has combat advantage against the target, it takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Str 13 (+3)	**Dex** 14 (+4)	**Wis** 11 (+2)
Con 16 (+5)	**Int** 10 (+2)	**Cha** 10 (+2)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment dagger

2+ Silvergrail Guards (G) **Level 8 Minion Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf XP –

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +6
AC 24, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19 **Perception** +9
Speed 5 Low-light vision
Saving Throws +5 against poison effects

Traits

Stand the Ground
The dwarf can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.

Steady-Footed
The dwarf can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Warhammer** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 8 damage.
Effect: The target is marked until the end of the dwarf's next turn.

Str 15 (+6)	**Dex** 10 (+4)	**Wis** 11 (+4)
Con 14 (+6)	**Int** 12 (+5)	**Cha** 13 (+5)

Alignment good **Languages** Common, Dwarven
Equipment chain hauberk, warhammer

Tactics

Silvergrail Guards: The guards mark enemies that attack Zelgar, making it harder for them to wound the priest. At the end of each round, on initiative count 0, place another guard on one edge of the map (determined randomly). Drawn to the scene by sounds of combat, the new guard joins the fray in the next round.

Werewolves: Clarissa and Ernest focus their attacks on Zelgar. If Zelgar succumbs to moon frenzy, the werewolves goad him into fleeing the town and joining his brother before he harms anyone he cares about. When bloodied, a frenzied werewolf changes to hybrid form and uses *lycanthrope fury*.

Dire Wolves: The dire wolves work together to flank their enemies and gain combat advantage.

Mooncrazed Peasants: The peasants follow the werewolves' orders. Left to their own devices, they flank enemies and attack with their daggers.

Features of the Area

Buildings: The roofs of the buildings are 10 feet high and can be climbed with a DC 15 Athletics check. All building doors and window shutters are closed and locked for the night (DC 20 Strength check or Thievery check to open).

Snowfall: Falling snow grants partial concealment to creatures more than 5 squares away.

Development

After the battle concludes, Sheriff Havenstone arrives and orders her guards to "clean up the mess." She chides Zelgar for putting himself at risk and thanks the adventurers for doing the same.

If the heroes capture and interrogate one of the werewolves, they learn that Ulmar's current lair is an abandoned farmhouse about five miles outside of town. Ulmar attacked a couple of nearby farms and took several captives, which he intends to devour. Clarissa and Ernest also reveal that Ulmar's pack currently includes six werewolves as well as some wolves and dire wolves. Moreover, Ulmar has won the allegiance of a band of eight gnolls.

If the characters kill both werewolves, Zelgar can obtain the above information by performing a Speak with Dead ritual on one of the corpses. The number of questions he can ask depends on his Religion check result (*Player's Handbook*, page 312).

The peasants have no clue where Ulmar is, or where his lair might be. All they know is that he moves around a lot and seems to pick targets at random. They also estimate that his pack numbers in the dozens (which is incorrect). They know nothing about the gnolls.

After the characters have learned all they can from the werewolves, Zelgar says, "*Ulmar has left us no choice but to confront him. I fear that the longer we wait, the stronger his pack will become. We should leave for the farmhouse at once. Ulmar will have it no other way, and I will not cower in my temple while innocent blood is spilled for my sake.*"

Heroes who learn about Ulmar's captives also pick up the following minor quest.

MINOR QUEST: RESCUE THE CAPTIVES

5th-Level Minor Quest (200 XP)
The characters complete this quest if they free all the captured peasants in the farmhouse and prevent the child on the upper floor from being attacked (see Event 3 for details).

Event 2: Crossroads of Terror

Combat Encounter Level 6 (1,250 XP)

Zelgar insists on tracking down his brother with due haste, but he defers to the characters' judgment if they insist on waiting until sunrise. Sheriff Havenstone offers to send along a handful of town guards for added protection, but Zelgar declines the offer, instead placing his utmost confidence in the adventurers. Secretly he thinks Havenstone's men are ill equipped to face Ulmar, and he refuses to throw away lives.

Zelgar leads the heroes through the farmlands surrounding Silvergrail. Many of the fields and surrounding forests are dusted with early winter snow, and the trek is uneventful until the party reaches a crossroads with a small graveyard and gallows. A family of peasants that has been running from roving members of Ulmar's pack hides under the gallows. The wolves are hot on the family's trail and are surprised to encounter the heroes.

As the characters arrive at the crossroads, read:
As you approach a misty crossroads, you see the telltale signs of an execution and burial site—the weathered gallows, unadorned gravestones, and crumbling walls surrounded by dead grass and cracked dirt covered in small patches of snow.

Perception DC 20: The character hears hushed weeping and a child's cough coming from underneath the gallows.

Light: Bright light (sunlight) or dim light (moonlight).

Monsters: 1 frenzied werewolf (F), 3 dire wolves (W), 2 gnoll huntmasters (G), 5 harmless peasants (hidden beneath the gallows).

Underneath the gallows is a small dugout sheltering a family of shivering peasants (a father, a mother, and three children ages 6, 8, and 11). The family has been hiding here for about half an hour, having been hunted by werewolves and wolves all night. Their farm lies several miles away and is not the same farm that Ulmar has claimed as his lair.

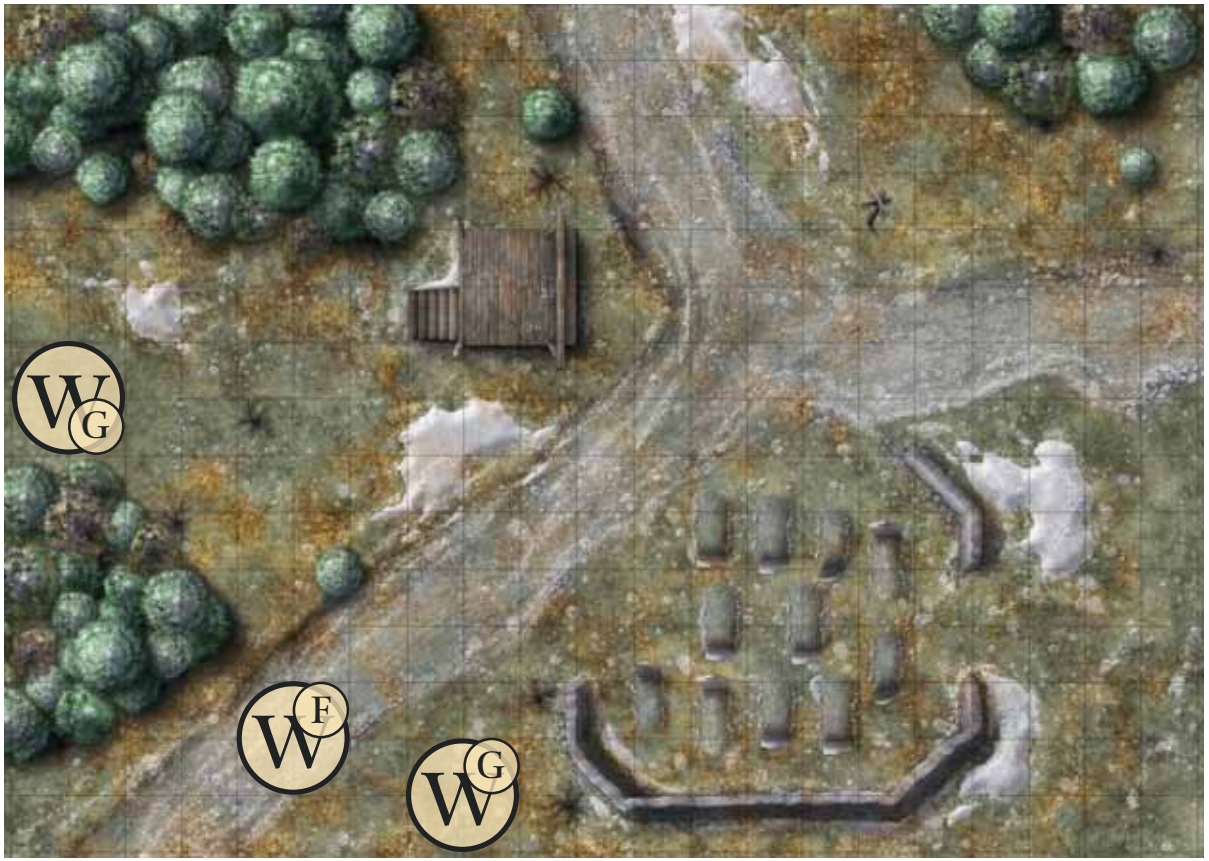
If the adventurers talk to them, the father always responds in a whisper. He answers no more than two questions before saying, "I'll speak no more! The wolves are still following us!" The family falls silent and holes up until the threat is no more.

When trouble arrives, read:
A sudden howl breaks the hush, and a hairy, wolf-headed humanoid riding a great dire wolf charges out of the mist. Two hyena-like humanoids wielding longbows follow closely behind on dire wolves of their own.

The monsters come to a sudden stop and appear confused. "Greetings," the werewolf snarls. "You haven't seen a couple farmers and their fat little children around here, have you?"

Then the werewolf's gaze fixes on Zelgar. "You look like someone I know."

This werewolf is named Broderick Severguile, and it takes him only a moment to recognize Zelgar, at which point he forgets about the peasants and orders the wolves and gnolls to attack Zelgar's escort while he confronts the priest directly.



Frenzied Werewolf (F) **Level 6 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger, human) XP 250

HP 78; **Bloodied** 39 **Initiative** +6
AC 18, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16 **Perception** +9
Speed 6 (8 in wolf form) Low-light vision

Traits

Regeneration
The werewolf regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the werewolf takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, or 2d8 + 8 against a bloodied target, and the target falls prone.

Bite (disease) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts werewolf moon frenzy (stage 1).

Club (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, or 2d8 + 9 against a bloodied target.

Lycanthrope Fury ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in hybrid form.
Effect: The werewolf uses *claw* and *bite*. Then the werewolf takes 5 damage.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The werewolf alters its physical form to appear as a Medium wolf, a unique human, or a hybrid.

Skills Bluff +8, Intimidate +8
Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 17 (+6) **Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 18 (+7) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+3)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment club

Werewolf Moon Frenzy **Level 6 Disease**
This disease starts with a fever, which soon becomes a violent and unpredictable rage.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a -2 penalty to Will.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, whenever the target becomes bloodied, it makes a melee basic attack as a free action against an ally adjacent to it.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, whenever the target is hit by an attack, it makes a melee basic attack as a free action against an ally adjacent to it.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
10 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
11-14: No change.
15 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

3 Dire Wolves (W) **Level 5 Skirmisher**
Large natural beast (mount) XP 200 each

HP 67; **Bloodied** 33 **Initiative** +7
AC 19, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16 **Perception** +9
Speed 8 Low-light vision

Traits

Pack Harrier
The wolf has combat advantage against any enemy that is adjacent to two or more of the wolf's allies.

Pack Hunter (mount)
The wolf's rider has combat advantage against any enemy that is adjacent to one of the rider's allies other than the wolf.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, or 3d8 + 4 against a prone target. The target falls prone if the wolf has combat advantage against it.

Str 19 (+6) **Dex** 16 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 19 (+6) **Int** 5 (-1) **Cha** 11 (+2)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

2 Gnoll Huntmasters (G) **Level 5 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid XP 200 each

HP 50; **Bloodied** 25 **Initiative** +4
AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15 **Perception** +11
Speed 8 Low-light vision

Traits

Pack Attack
The gnoll's attacks deal 5 extra damage to any enemy that has two or more of the gnoll's allies adjacent to it.

Standard Actions

Handaxe (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 3 damage, or 2d6 + 5 while the gnoll is bloodied.

Longbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 30 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 8 damage, or 1d10 + 10 while the gnoll is bloodied.

Skills Stealth +11
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 19 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 14 (+4) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 7 (+0)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Equipment leather armor, handaxe, longbow, 30 arrows

Tactics

Werewolf: Broderick leaps from the back of his wolf to attack Zelgar or the weakest-looking enemy. Broderick's goal is to capture Zelgar and bring him to Ulmar, unconscious if necessary, and kill everyone else (including the peasants, if they are found).

Broderick values his life. If he is bloodied, he can be frightened off with a successful DC 15 Intimidate check. He also flees if two or more dire wolves are killed or if he is reduced to 15 hit points or fewer, leaving the gnolls and any remaining wolves to cover his retreat (see "Development" below).

Dire Wolves: The wolves work together to take down single enemies at a time and use *pack harrier* and *pack hunter* as opportunity allows. If two of the wolves are slain, the third flees once it is bloodied.

Gnolls: The huntmasters dismount and fire arrows from a safe distance, resorting to their axes only when forced into melee combat. The gnolls fight to the death.

Features of the Area

Gallows: Climbing onto the gallows costs 1 extra square of movement. Any creature behind the gallows gains partial cover.

Graveyard: The crumbling walls around the graves are 4 feet high. They and the gravestones provide partial cover, and the squares the walls occupy are difficult terrain.

Shrubbery: Any square containing shrubs is lightly obscured but not difficult terrain.

Snow: Squares containing snow are difficult terrain.

Treasure: One gnoll carries a *potion of healing* and a pouch containing 90 gp. The other has a pouch holding 80 gp and a moonstone worth 100 gp. The peasants also have treasure; see below.

Development

If the adventurers prevail, the family of peasants emerges from underneath the gallows. The father thanks them and produces a level 9 common or uncommon magic item wrapped in oilcloth—a family heirloom that he bequeaths to the adventurers for their heroism. The farmer claims it belonged to his great-grandfather, who was also an adventurer.

If the party was cruel or callous toward the peasants, the father presents no such item, although characters who succeed on a DC 10 Insight check can see that he's concealing something. Zelgar frowns on "heroes" who try to steal the family's heirloom.

If Broderick escapes, he regroups with Ulmar many miles away. Ulmar listens to everything Broderick has to say, including his tedious excuses for failure, before ripping out Broderick's throat and ending his miserable life.

Event 3: Tears in the Farmhouse

Combat Encounter Level 7 (1,500 XP)

In Event 1, the heroes learned the location of Ulmar's lair—an abandoned farmhouse located several miles outside of town. Zelgar doesn't recall the names of the people who used to live there, only that the farm has been untended for years.

As the characters approach the farmhouse, they hear crying from within. The bottom floor contains four captured peasants and a gang of gnolls allied with Ulmar's pack (including the gnoll leader, a fang of Yeenoghu). The upper floor holds a peasant boy who managed to lock himself in a room, as well as two gnolls that threaten to devour him.

Light: Bright light (sunlight) or dim light (moonlight).

Monsters: 1 fang of Yeenoghu (F), 3 death-pledged gnolls (D), 2 gnoll gorgers (G), 5 harmless peasants (P).

When the characters reach the farmhouse, read:
A neglected farmhouse sits in the middle of an untended field overgrown with weeds. Pumpkins killed by frost rot in their patches amid flattened rows of brown cornstalks and snow-dusted fields of grain hemmed in by broken wooden fences. The farmhouse has two stories, but one corner of the upper floor has collapsed, exposing the interior.

As you approach the house, you hear a child screaming somewhere inside.

Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Perception check ascertains that the screaming child is on the upper floor of the farmhouse. Any character who rolls a 22 or higher on the check also hears the sound of adults crying on the ground floor.

Zelgar is not content to stand by while innocents are threatened, but he's willing to follow whatever plan the characters put forward. If they rely on him to devise a plan, Zelgar suggests splitting up and approaching the house from two sides.

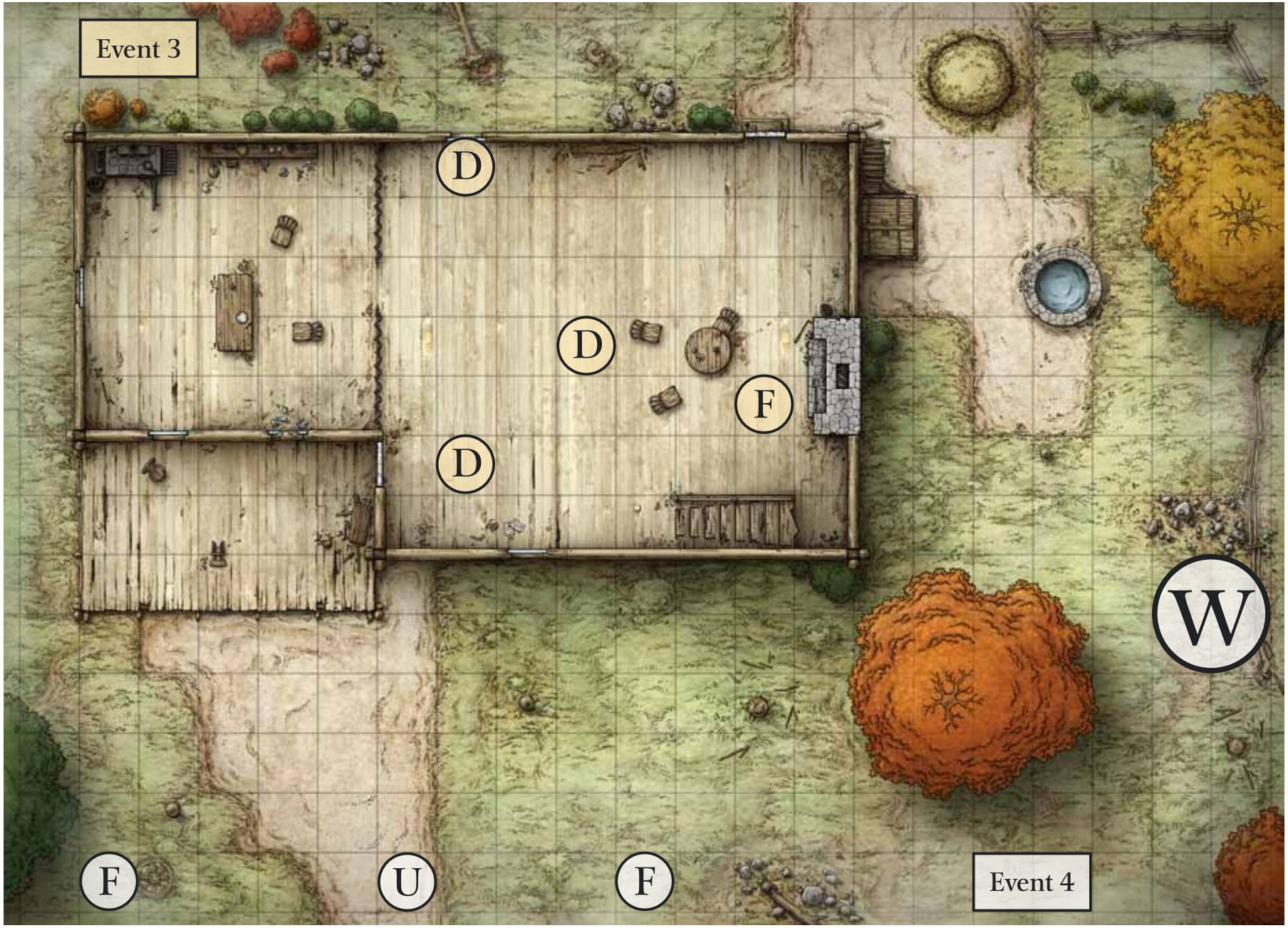
When the characters enter the ground floor of the farmhouse or peer inside, read:
Four gnolls armed with spears guard four terrified peasants tied together with ropes and huddled in the middle of the floor. They are crying and whispering prayers.

The four peasants are Earl and Marion Stillwater, a married couple, an old codger named Thaddeus Kestrel, and a young wagon driver named Fjorn Dannister. When she sees the characters, Marion Stillwater calls out to them, *"They've got my boy! Upstairs! Please save him!"*

Thaddeus and Fjorn are actually members of Ulmar's pack hiding among the prisoners; they do not reveal their true nature until Event 4, although characters who are suspicious of the peasants can make a DC 22 Insight check to realize that Thaddeus and Fjorn aren't truly frightened. They can easily slip free of their bonds by assuming wolf or hybrid form, but their orders are to remain incognito until Ulmar returns. The gnolls are not aware that Thaddeus and Fjorn are werewolves, and they treat them like prisoners. See Event 4 for the werewolves' statistics.

The 8-year-old Stillwater boy, Odd, managed to escape from his bonds and flee before the gnolls noticed he was gone. At first the gnolls assumed the boy had fled the house, but they were unable to find him in the surrounding fields. After returning to the house, the gnoll gorgers searched the upstairs and found the locked door leading to the room where he's currently hiding.

If the characters do not reach the gnoll gorgers in 3 rounds, they smash through the door and kill the boy in a rage, despite Ulmar's instructions to keep the peasants alive.


Event 3
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Event 4

Fang of Yeenoghu (F) Level 7 Skirmisher (Leader)	
Medium natural humanoid, gnoll	XP 300
HP 77; **Bloodied** 38	**Initiative** +9
AC 21, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18	**Perception** +3
Speed 8	Low-light vision
Traits	
Pack Attack	
The gnoll's attacks deal 5 extra damage to any enemy that has two or more of the gnoll's allies adjacent to it.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Cudgel of Bloody Teeth** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 8 damage, or 2d6 + 10 while the gnoll is bloodied. The target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
⸸ **Relentless Push** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: Before the attack, the gnoll shifts up to 2 squares.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 10 damage, or 1d10 + 12 while the gnoll is bloodied. The gnoll can push the target 1 square.	
Effect: One ally within 5 squares of the gnoll can shift 1 square as a free action.	
✧ **Howl of the Demon** ✦ **Recharge** ⚅	
Effect: Close burst 5 (allies in the burst). Each target can make a melee basic attack as a free action.	
Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+3)	
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+6)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common	
Equipment leather armor, cudgel of bloody teeth (greatclub)	

Tactics

Gnolls: The gnolls have orders from Ulmar to guard but not harm the peasants, but they are cruel and savage by nature, and so they welcome the characters' arrival as an opportunity to satisfy their bloodlust. They fight to the death. If the gnoll gorgers are presented with new enemies to attack, they ignore the peasant boy until after they've dealt with the new arrivals.

Werewolves: Thaddeus and Fjorn wait to see how the battle plays out. They intercede only if Zelgar is in danger of being killed by the gnolls, at which point they do their utmost to keep him alive without revealing their true nature.

3 Deathpledged Gnolls (D) Level 5 Brute	
Medium natural humanoid	XP 200 each
HP 74; **Bloodied** 37	**Initiative** +4
AC 18, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16	**Perception** +4
Speed 8	Low-light vision
Traits	
Pack Attack	
The gnoll's attacks deal 5 extra damage to any enemy that has two or more of the gnoll's allies adjacent to it.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Longspear** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 9 damage, or 2d6 + 11 while the gnoll is bloodied.	
Triggered Actions	
Claws of Yeenoghu (healing)	
Trigger: The gnoll first drops to 0 hit points.	
Effect (No Action): The gnoll regains 5 hit points, gains 1 action point, and gains resist 15 to all damage. At the end of its next turn, the gnoll drops to 0 hit points.	
Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 15 (+4)	
Con 14 (+4) **Int** 9 (+1) **Cha** 7 (+0)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common	
Equipment leather armor, light shield, longspear	

Features of the Area

Event 3 and Event 4 use the same pair of maps, representing the ground floor and the second story of the farmhouse.

Creaky Floors: The floors in the old farmhouse are in bad shape. Creatures in the house take a –2 penalty to Stealth checks to move quietly.

Furniture: Beds, tables, and chairs count as difficult terrain.

Stairs: The staircase is treated as difficult terrain while ascending it and normal terrain otherwise.

Treasure: In exchange for saving his life, Odd gives his rescuers an unusual gold coin he found in the upstairs room of the farmhouse; see "Development" below for more information on this coin. If the characters do not reach the boy in time, they find the coin near his remains.

2 Gnoll Gorgers (G) Level 7 Brute	
Medium natural humanoid	XP 300 each
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48	**Initiative** +6
AC 19, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 18	**Perception** +3
Speed 7	Low-light vision
Traits	
Pack Attack	
The gnoll's attacks deal 5 extra damage to any enemy that has two or more of the gnoll's allies adjacent to it.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 8 damage, or 3d6 + 10 while the gnoll is bloodied.	
Minor Actions	
Gorge (healing) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Effect: Melee 1 (one ally). The target takes 5 damage, and the gnoll regains 5 hit points.	
Skills Intimidate +11, Stealth +11	
Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 17 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+3)	
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 9 (+2) **Cha** 17 (+6)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common	
Equipment leather armor	

Characters searching the farmhouse for treasure and succeeding on a DC 15 Perception check find a secret compartment in the fireplace (or some other location of your choice). Inside is a level 8 common or uncommon magic item.

Unsafe Floor: The floor at the top of the stairs is completely rotted and can't support much weight. A creature that enters one of the squares marked on the map must succeed on a DC 15 Acrobatics check or fall through, taking 1d10 damage. A Small creature gains a +5 bonus to the check, and a Large creature takes a –5 penalty to the check. The section of floor through which the creature falls becomes a hole around which others must navigate.

Walls: A 5-foot section of wall can be smashed with a DC 15 Strength check and has 30 hit points and defenses 5.

Windows: The windows on the ground floor are smashed and broken but grant partial cover to

creatures behind them. The upstairs windows are intact, provide a similar benefit, and require a minor action and a DC 10 Strength check to open or close.

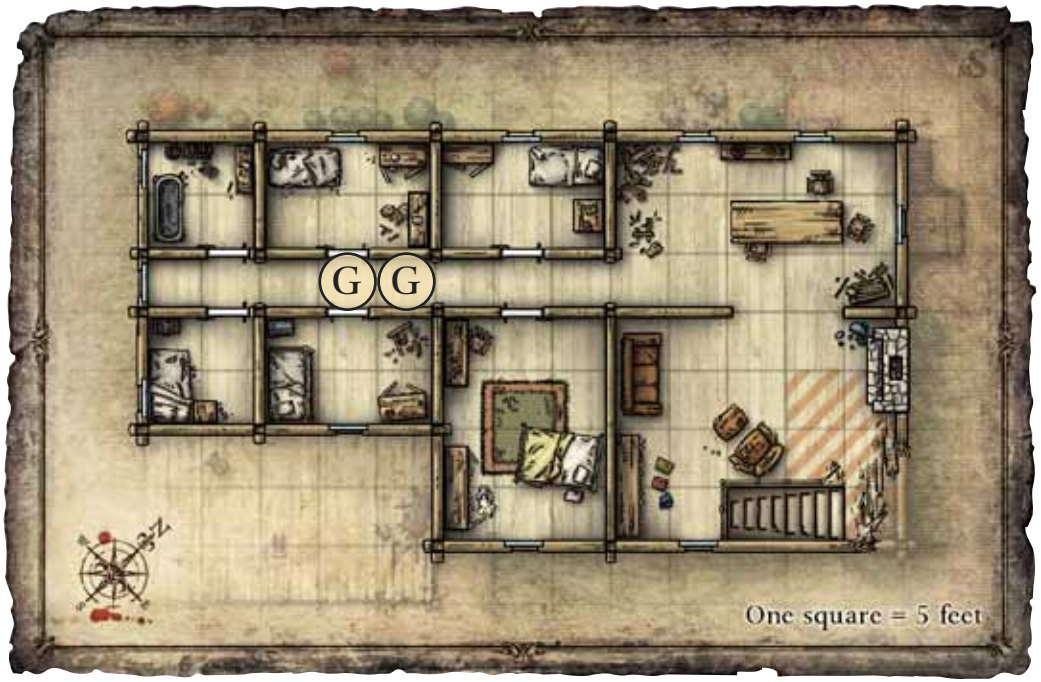
Development

Odd Stillwater found a gold coin that he happily gives to his rescuers. The coin is of peculiar mintage: it has seven sides and bears the likeness of a gold dragon on one face and the word "Karajkarang" on the other.

A DC 15 Arcana or History check reveals that the name and coin once belonged to a powerful gold dragon that perished long ago but left behind a hoard that, to date, no one has found. A DC 22 Arcana check reveals that anyone possessing a coin from Karajkarang's hoard gains an intuitive sense of where the trove is buried (in terms of general direction and distance) and can use the coin as a talisman to find it. The coin is intended as a hook for an adventure based around the discovery and exploration of the dead gold dragon's long-lost lair. Finding the dragon's trove could be a major quest, and what the characters find there is left for you to develop. If this hook doesn't interest you, the gold coin might be worth something to a collector, who might be willing to trade a level-appropriate magic item for it.

Once they are rescued, the terrified peasants (including the werewolves hidden among them) are willing to share what they know.

- ✦ Ulmar and his pack are out hunting, but they plan to return soon.
- ✦ Ulmar is frequently seen in the company of two other werewolves: a male human named Ravian and a female human named Elsie.
- ✦ The gnolls work for Ulmar, although the alliance seems uneasy. The fang of Yeenoghu seems to be the leader of the gnoll gang.



Event 4: Wolves at the Door

Combat Encounter Level 8 (1,800 XP)

There's enough time between Event 3 and this one for the characters to take a short rest. The exact time of Ulmar's return is left up to you, although ideally it occurs at night beneath a full moon.

Zelgar insists on waiting in the farmhouse and takes time to comfort any rescued peasants. Meanwhile, the heroes have time to prepare for Ulmar's return.

Light: Bright light (sunlight) or dim light (moonlight).

Monsters: Ulmar Lightborn (U), 2 or 4 frenzied werewolves (F), 1 worg (W) mounted by 4 moon-crazed peasants.

When you're ready to begin the encounter, read:

Snow begins to fall, and above the soft hush of the chill wind you hear unfriendly howls that get louder with each passing minute.

You don't have to wait long to see four lupine shapes skulking toward the farmhouse. Three of the creatures are wolves; the fourth is a horribly scarred and mangy worg as big as a farm wagon. Riding on its back are four humans clad in bloody buckskins.

Ulmar isn't expecting to find Zelgar or the characters at the farmhouse, so he's not shy about letting everyone know he has returned and that he's not alone. Accompanying him are two members of his pack, a male human named Ravian and a female human named Elsie. Ulmar, Ravian, and Elsie all approach in wolf form.

Once Ulmar gets within 5 squares of the farmhouse, he can smell non-lycanthropes inside. He assumes hybrid form and calls them out. Ravian and Elsie remain in their wolf forms.

If Thaddeus and Fjorn (see Event 3) are still lurking in the farmhouse and haven't been exposed as

Ulmar Lightborn (U) **Level 8 Elite Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human (shapechanger) XP 700

HP 180; **Bloodied** 90 **Initiative** +10
AC 24, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20 **Perception** +10
Speed 6 (8 in wolf form)
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Regeneration
Ulmar regains 5 hit points whenever he starts his turn and has at least 1 hit point. When he takes damage from a silvered weapon, his regeneration does not function on his next turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ Claw ✦ At-Will
Requirement: Ulmar must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 7 damage, or 2d6 + 11 against a bloodied or prone target.
Effect: The target is marked until the end of Ulmar's next turn.

⊕ Bite ✦ At-Will
Requirement: Ulmar must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, and the target falls prone. If the target is humanoid and bloodied after the attack, it gains the curse of frenzied werewolf lycanthropy (stage 1).

Werewolf Frenzy ✦ At-Will
Requirement: Ulmar must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Effect: Ulmar uses *claw* twice. If both attacks hit the same target, Ulmar uses *bite* against it and deals 5 extra damage to it if that attack hits.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) **✦ At-Will**
Effect: Ulmar alters his physical form to appear as a Medium wolf, a Medium unique human, or a hybrid until he uses *change shape* again or until he drops to 0 hit points. Ulmar retains his statistics in his new form. His clothing, armor, and other possessions do not change.

Skills Athletics +15, Intimidate +13, Stealth +13
Str 22 (+10) **Dex** 19 (+8) **Wis** 13 (+5)
Con 18 (+8) **Int** 11 (+4) **Cha** 18 (+8)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Frenzied Werewolf Lycanthropy **Level 8 Curse**
A rising moon awakens the beast within, and it stops at nothing to be free.

Stage 0: The curse is dormant until lifted.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a –2 penalty to Will.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, whenever the target becomes bloodied, it makes a melee basic attack as a free action against an ally adjacent to it.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, whenever the target is hit by an attack, it makes a melee basic attack as a free action against an ally adjacent to it.
Stage 4: While affected by stage 4, the target becomes a frenzied werewolf under the DM's control, but only on nights of the full moon. The werewolf's bite exposes targets to this curse, rather than werewolf moon frenzy.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes a Nature check if it is at any stage but 4.
11 or Lower: The stage of the curse increases by 1.
12–15: No change.
16 or Higher: The stage of the curse decreases by 1 (if at stage 0, there is no change).
Lifting the Curse: The target must bestow the curse to one good creature of its level or higher. A Remove Affliction ritual performed on the target also lifts the curse.

members of Ulmar's pack, they wait for their master's order to strike. Characters who are keeping an eye on the peasants can make a DC 22 Insight check to sense Thaddeus's and Fjorn's nervous excitement, darting eyes, and wicked intentions.

When Ulmar realizes his brother is present, read:

"Brother, there is only one way to end the bloodshed. Join us. Join the pack!" Ulmar gestures toward his wolf companions.

Zelgar grasps his holy symbol tightly and replies, "I have come to rid you of your curse, Ulmar, one way or the other! Erathis and Pelor offer you a choice: repent as the man you once were, or die a monster! Allow me to perform the ritual that will set you on the path of redemption!"

The players should be given every opportunity to inject their characters into the unfolding drama. In the absence of words or actions on their part, Ulmar laughs at his brother's bravado but agrees to let Zelgar perform the ritual. However, this acquiescence is merely a ruse to force a confrontation (as any character can determine with a successful Insight check opposed by Ulmar's untrained Bluff check). Once he gets close enough to attack his brother, Ulmar strikes.

Tactics

Zelgar: If he's unable to perform a Remove Affliction ritual on his brother while Ulmar is conscious, Zelgar tries to knock Ulmar unconscious. He fights until either he or his brother is laid low.

Ulmar: Under no circumstances will Ulmar kill his brother. Ulmar tries to persuade Zelgar to join his pack by infecting his brother with lycanthropy. If all else fails, he tries to knock Zelgar unconscious and drag him away to a safe place far from the influence of the adventurers, hoping that his brother will eventually come around once the curse takes hold of him.

Ulmar isn't carrying any weapons and has no effective attacks in human form, so he assumes wolf or hybrid form in combat.

Ulmar does not flee as long as Zelgar is alive. If Zelgar dies through some misfortune, Ulmar continues to fight until he becomes bloodied, at which point he flees (accompanied by the surviving members of his pack).

Werewolves: Ravian and Elsie help Ulmar gain combat advantage against Zelgar by flanking the priest and cutting off his escape. They also try to kill enemies that mark or challenge Ulmar. Like their leader, they carry no weapons and thus assume wolf or hybrid form in combat.

Thaddeus and Fjorn (see Event 3) reveal their true allegiance and attack enemies on the outskirts of the battle. They might step in to aid Ulmar in his bid to

2 Frenzied Werewolves (F) **Level 6 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human — XP 250 each

HP 78; **Bloodied** 39 — **Initiative** +6
AC 18, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16 — **Perception** +9
Speed 6 (8 in wolf form) — Low-light vision

Traits

Regeneration
The werewolf regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the werewolf takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, or 2d8 + 8 against a bloodied target, and the target falls prone.

Bite (disease) **✦ At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in wolf or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts werewolf moon frenzy (stage 1).

Club (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Requirement: The werewolf must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, or 2d8 + 9 against a bloodied target.

Lycanthrope Fury ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The werewolf must be in hybrid form.
Effect: The werewolf uses *claw* and *bite*. Then the werewolf takes 5 damage.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) **✦ At-Will**
Effect: The werewolf alters its physical form to appear as a Medium wolf, a unique human, or a hybrid.

Skills Bluff +8, Intimidate +8
Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 17 (+6) **Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 18 (+7) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+3)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment club

Werewolf Moon Frenzy **Level 6 Disease**
This disease starts with a fever, which soon becomes a violent and unpredictable rage.

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target takes a -2 penalty to Will.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, whenever the target becomes bloodied, it makes a melee basic attack as a free action against an ally adjacent to it.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, whenever the target is hit by an attack, it makes a melee basic attack as a free action against an ally adjacent to it.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
10 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
11-14: No change.
15 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

Worg (W) **Level 9 Brute**
Large natural magical beast — XP 400

Initiative +7 — **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 120; **Bloodied** 60
AC 20; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 18
Speed 8

Traits

Frightful Growl (fear) **✦ Aura** 3
Enemies in the aura take a -1 penalty to attack rolls, and allies in the aura gain a +1 power bonus to attack rolls.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Skills Stealth +12
Str 21 (+9) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+4)
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 7 (+2) **Cha** 16 (+7)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal

4 Mooncrazed Peasants (P) **Level 5 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human — XP 50 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +6
AC 19, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16 — **Perception** +2
Speed 6

Standard Actions

Wounding Dagger (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 4 damage. If the peasant has combat advantage against the target, it takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Str 13 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+2)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 10 (+2)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment dagger

turn his brother into one of them, but only if Ravian or Elsie is killed.

If Ulmar drops to 0 hit points or fewer, all remaining frenzied werewolves flee.

Worg: Ulmar rescued this battle-scarred beast from a band of goblinoids. It heeds Ulmar's commands and fights to the death.

Mooncrazed Peasants: These sad fools seek to become members of the pack but have yet to be judged worthy. They ride into battle on the worg's back, then leap off at the first opportunity and attack with their daggers. They seek to prove their loyalty by fighting as long as any werewolf remains alive.

Features of the Area

See Event 3 for the maps of the farmhouse and the details of the environment.

CURSES

A curse (such as frenzied werewolf lycanthropy) works much like a disease. It might worsen over time, and a creature afflicted with a curse can try to resist it by making a skill check.

Until the curse is lifted, the creature must attempt a skill check (as specified by the curse) at the end of each extended rest to determine whether the curse's stage changes or stays the same. When the creature reaches a new stage of the curse, it is subjected to the effects of the new stage right away, and unless a curse's description says otherwise, the effects of the new stage replace the effects of the old one.

Unlike a disease, a curse does not end when a creature reaches stage 0. Instead, the curse becomes dormant. While the curse is dormant, the creature suffers no ill effects. At the end of the creature's next extended rest, it must make another skill check to see if the curse worsens or remains dormant. Even the death of the creature does not end the curse; if the creature is returned to life, the curse returns with it.

A curse cannot be ended by making skill checks. To lift a curse, the creature must complete a specific task or receive the benefits of a specific ritual, as indicated in the curse's description.

Development

One way the heroes can save Ulmar is to knock him unconscious and allow Zelgar to perform the Remove Affliction ritual uninterrupted. The ritual takes 1 hour to perform, and there's a chance it could kill Ulmar depending on the Heal check result (*Player's Handbook*, page 311). Characters can either try to aid Zelgar's check or perform the ritual in his stead. If the ritual deals damage to Ulmar while he's unconscious (which happens on a Heal check result of 29 or lower), he dies. Zelgar accepts his brother's death but is profoundly troubled by it—the gods, it seems, have ruled against any possibility of redemption. Zelgar cannot afford the money to have his brother raised from the dead and begins contemplating funeral arrangements.

Concluding the Adventure

If Ulmar survives the ritual and is cured of his lycanthropy, he no longer poses a threat to his brother, the adventurers, or Silvergrail. His alignment reverts to good, and he deeply regrets the harm he has caused. He cannot bring himself to return to Silvergrail—not after the horrors he has inflicted upon its citizens. Instead, he sets about repairing the abandoned farmhouse and sequesters himself there until time begins to heal the wounds that the ritual could not. On a happier note, Zelgar is grateful to the adventurers and the gods for reuniting him with Ulmar, and he devotes much of his time to helping his brother find peace and redemption. As a consequence, the brotherly bond between them becomes stronger than ever.

If Zelgar contracts lycanthropy, he continues to oppose his brother, defying Ulmar by refusing to join his pack. In response, Ulmar tries to knock Zelgar unconscious and take him far away from Silvergrail. If the characters are unable to stop him, there's a good chance they will never see the Lightborn brothers again.

If all ends well, Sheriff Havenstone is grateful for the adventurers' success in quelling the threat posed by Ulmar and his pack of werewolves. She gives them a letter that they can trade in for some future favor or benefit. If they were forced to slay Ulmar, she is sad for Zelgar's loss but happy to see the priest returned safely.

Whether the adventurers choose to remain in Silvergrail is up to them. If they obtain the mysterious gold coin in Event 3 and learn its secret, they can use the town as a base while they search for the long-lost hoard of the dragon Karajkarang. If the heroes managed to reunite the Lightborn brothers, Zelgar's priestly abilities and Ulmar's adventuring experience might be of some assistance.

About the Author

Julian Sieber is a 20-year-old 1st-level human adventurer, trained in film editing and writing, gaming, martial arts, religion, musical comedy, eating, and sleeping. He resides happily and peacefully in the grand city of Perth, Western Australia, and you can follow his life's quest journal via his Twitter feed, @killerJules.

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The Crafthouse of Inspiration

By Doug Hyatt

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"Show us something we've never seen before. Show us something so bold and grand that people would lie, steal, and murder just for a glimpse at how it was done. Show us the one reason why, a hundred years from now, the world will still remember your name. Show us that miracle, and your invention might—I said might—just grace the Hall of Wonders."

—Cavandro the Cunning,
High Artificer of Gond,
to a young inventor

Of all the great temples in the Realms, none draws more inventors, builders, and artificers to its doors than the Crafthouse of Inspiration in the East Rift. Built in 1469-1470 DR with the assistance of the gold dwarves of Eartheart, the Crafthouse has emerged as the preeminent temple of Gond in all of Faerûn.

Adventurers from across the continent bring artifacts, relics, books, and other scraps of knowledge to the Crafthouse, hoping to sell them to the priests there. The temple scholars spend their days studying objects both arcane and divine, as well as furthering their knowledge in metallurgy, agriculture, engineering, alchemy, and other crafts. The most talented inventors in the world travel to the Crafthouse to observe the wonders on display there and to apprentice with its legendary artisans.

At its heart, the Crafthouse of Inspiration symbolizes the act of creation itself. Beginners and experts toil from morning to night, working stone, forging steel, brewing potions, and devising strange mechanical constructs. The Gondsmen believe that to serve Gond, one must discover, build, invent, and create. As a result, all the doings at the Crafthouse of Inspiration are centered on creativity.

Approaching the Crafthouse

The Crafthouse of Inspiration is located twenty miles east of Eartheart on an isolated shelf that juts out from the cliff's side. Visitors approaching the temple from the surface (by the road from Delzimmer) must traverse a hundred feet of dizzyingly narrow stairs to reach the ground below. Some of the stairs have been enchanted by the master stonemason Thorik

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Stonesinger and can vanish on command. Although High Artificer Cavandro the Cunning does not expect too many threats from the surface, one can never be too prepared, especially given all the priceless inventions housed inside the temple's walls that might tempt thieves.

Most of the denizens of the East Rift travel to the Crafthouse of Inspiration by way of a stone road connecting Eartheart with the temple. Because the Crafthouse rests on a shelf fifty feet above the floor of the East Rift, visitors must ascend a long stone bridge to reach it.

1. The Clockwork Colossus

At the base of the bridge, on the side leading toward Eartheart, looms the Clockwork Colossus, a menacing, twenty-foot-tall humanoid construct composed of metal rods, screws, and gears. The colossus whirs and hums constantly, shifting its gaze to follow those who approach the bridge, and occasionally clenching and unclenching its massive fists.

Built by Cavandro the Cunning with the aid of the gnome artificer Lathee, the colossus acts as a deterrent to those, such as drow from the Underchasm, who would seek to attack the Crafthouse. Truthfully, the colossus is nothing more than "smoke and mirrors," capable only of a few dramatic head and arm movements and the occasional whistling blast of steam. But the more Cavandro insists that the colossus is just a giant scarecrow (some artificers jokingly call it a "scaredrow"), the more his own Gondsmen believe that he must have some way to animate the mechanical monstrosity if the need arises.

2. Springboard Bridge

A stone bridge nearly one hundred feet long spans the gap between the East Rift floor and the shelf on which the Crafthouse rests. The bridge is just wide enough for wagons carrying stone and other goods from Eartheart to pass. Sections of the bridge have been enchanted with arcane springs that are concealed beneath the surface (Perception DC 25 to notice, Thievery DC 32 to disarm). From within the Crafthouse, the Gondsmen can trigger the springboards as needed, such as in the event of an attack from the Underdark. When the springboards are set off, a section of the bridge erupts, propelling its occupants over the side and hurling them into the Rift.

3. Thorik's Forge

Taking the northern path after crossing the bridge leads one to a large cave that houses a forge used by the temple's metalworkers and visiting dwarf smiths. Thorik Stonesinger and his masons work metal and stone in this area to use in the construction of new buildings in Eartheart or Gondstown (see the sidebar).

GONDSTOWN

The shelf on which the Crafthouse sits extends for another mile before ending in a sharp drop-off. A small settlement of about five hundred people, nicknamed Gondstown, has formed in this area. Home to many minor crafters and aspiring apprentices, as well as the families of the artificers and priests, Gondstown continues to grow as more artisans are drawn to the East Rift by the promise of wealth, knowledge, and fame.

4. Entrance Portico

Rejecting ornate trappings and decorative elements, which they view as completely wasteful, the Gondsmen build their temples in a plain fashion, eschewing form for function. Unsurprisingly, then, the Crafthouse resembles nothing more than a giant stone box when viewed from a distance.

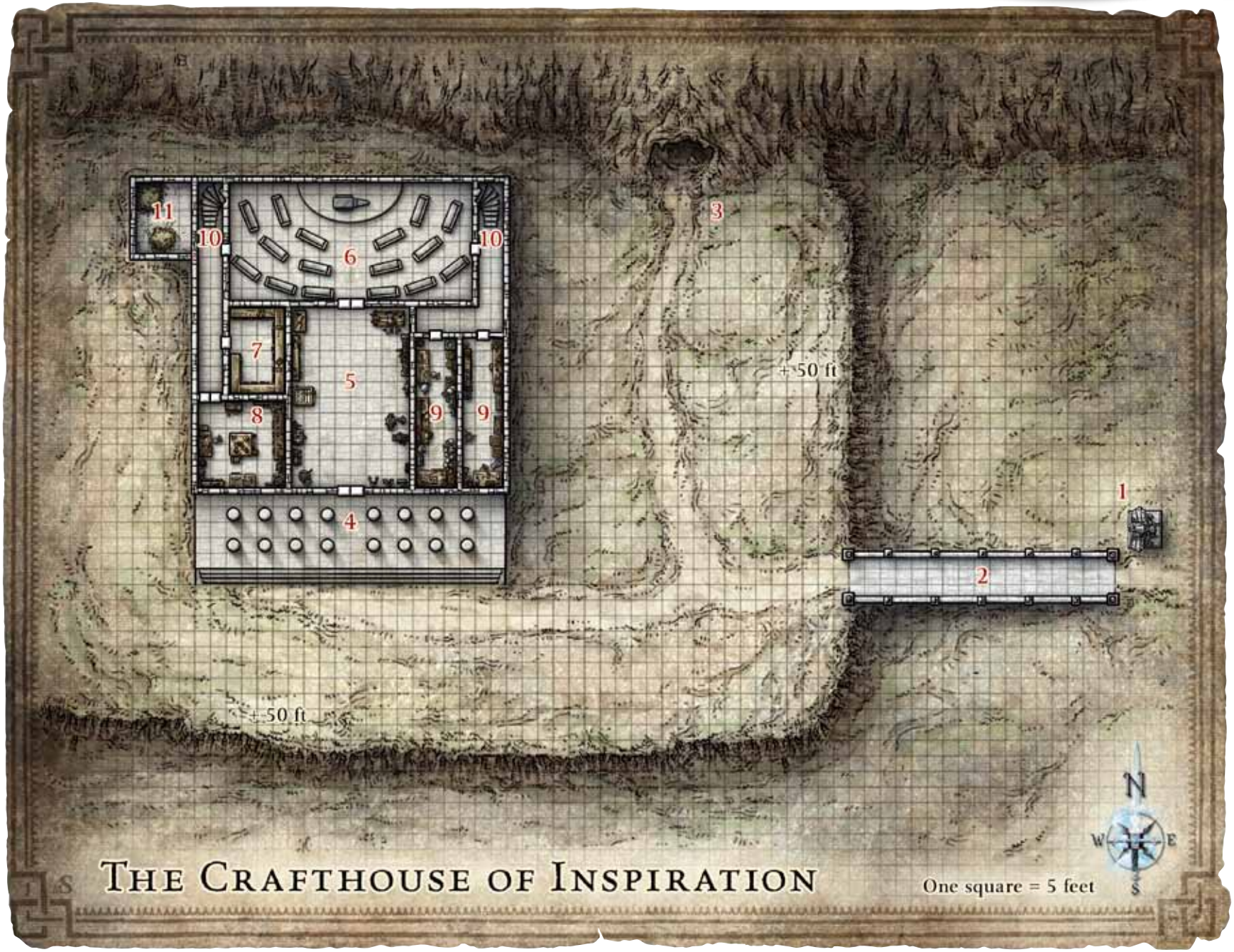
The main entrance to the Crafthouse of Inspiration lies a short distance along the path leading west from the bridge. It consists of a wide colonnade, with stone pillars stretching from the floor to a vaulted ceiling. The structure is open to the outside on the east and west sides. In the center of the northern wall, double doors lead into the Hall of Wonders. Scholars lecture groups of eager students in the entrance portico, and priests of Gond mill about regularly, discussing temple business.

5. The Hall of Wonders

Upon crossing the threshold of the temple, newcomers arrive in the Hall of Wonders, a vast, vaulted chamber showcasing the finest creations of the Gondsmen of Faerûn. Designed to impress and intimidate, the chamber is abuzz with the clicking and whirring of various wondrous devices. A long carpet bisects the hall, leading to another set of double doors that open into the main temple sanctuary.

On either side of the carpet is a bewildering array of inventions, each one adorned with a plaque showing the name of its creator and the year in which it was added to the hall. Described below are three of the extraordinary achievements of the artificers and priests of Gond.

Seeking Crossbows: Throughout the hall, animated crossbows hover seemingly of their own accord, constantly shifting to stay trained on the occupants of the chamber. The crossbows do not appear to be loaded, but if anyone touches one of the exhibits, the nearest crossbow aims at the offender, then


11
10
10
6
3
7
5
+50 ft
8
9
9
4
1
2
+50 ft
N
W
E
S
THE CRAFTHOUSE OF INSPIRATION
One square = 5 feet

sparks and buzzes with electricity. In fact, that is all the crossbows can do, since the last thing Cavandro wants is rampant bolts of lightning destroying Gond's priceless collection. Yet another deceptive invention of the High Artificer designed to deter potential thieves, the mysterious crossbows serve as an elaborate alarm system for the hall. If any visitor attempts to abscond from the chamber with one of the inventions, the crossbows emit a high-pitched drone that resonates throughout the Crafthouse.

Recording Quill: As soon as new arrivals in the hall begin to speak, this hovering quill, designed by the drow wizard Ygstrazi, pens their every word in shimmering sentences of light in midair. Each person's utterances appear in a different color of the spectrum, remaining for a few seconds before dissipating. Regardless of what language is being spoken or how many people are conversing, the quill keeps pace, effortlessly reproducing every syllable.

Stairs to Nowhere: Fabricated by the dwarf master artificer Thorik Stonesinger, this set of two marble steps leading at a right angle off the main walkway allows a visitor to traverse the hall as though walking on air. When someone who is standing on the lower step lifts his or her leg above the upper step, the lower step vanishes and reappears underneath the person's foot. Similarly, if a passenger seeks to descend, he or she can turn around and place a foot beneath the lower step. The upper step then disappears and reappears just in time to bear his or her weight. The steps are limited to use within the hall.

Other Inventions: The artificers of Gond are not shy about exhibiting their greatest works, and many other astonishing objects grace the Hall of Wonders. The DM is encouraged to come up with any other items suitable for display here.

6. Sanctuary

Beyond the Hall of Wonders lies the sanctuary, where the residents of Gondstown and the Crafthouse gather for worship. Long stone pews form a semicircle facing the altar: a giant anvil around which glowing cogs, gears, screws, and other scraps of metal dart about like a cloud of fireflies.

In a tradition dating back many years, crafters bring copies of their creations and smash them against the Great Anvil, an act that serves both as a tribute to Gond and a request for good fortune. In modern times, worshipers have started using cheap replicas carved from wood in place of working copies of their inventions. Though some adhere to the old ways, most inventors prefer this more symbolic gesture because they don't want to waste expensive materials and ruin a perfectly functional device.

7. Library of Ygstrazi

The Crafthouse maintains a sizable library that contains books and scrolls on the crafting arts (woodworking projects, stonemasonry guides, mechanical construct schematics, agricultural treatises, alchemical formulas, texts on metallurgy, and so on), arcane miscellany (tomes about runes, sigils, and enchanting items), and the history of Faerûn.

The renowned drow wizard Ygstrazi, creator of the recording quill in the Hall of Wonders, oversees the day-to-day operations of the library. Cavandro faced considerable opposition when hiring a drow for this task, but Ygstrazi has repeatedly proven his loyalty to Gond and to the East Rift. Despite his flawless record of service, though, many still view the librarian with hatred and suspicion.

8. Alchemy Lab

Shelves lining the walls of this chamber hold vials and jars that contain seemingly every liquid, oil, and powder in the world. Alchemists gather at the long tables in this room to experiment with various concoctions. In the event of an inadvertent explosion, emergency cords drop from the ceiling. If a cord is yanked, a magical burst of water inundates the workstation, dousing any blaze before it gets out of control.

Tanri Brightwind, a genasi priestess of Gond and a master alchemist, often collaborates with her apprentices here, attempting to rediscover the lost secret of smokepowder, as well as perfecting other formulas to aid the defenders of the East Rift in their struggles against the denizens of the Underdark.

9. Workrooms

At all hours of the day, Gondsmen toil in these workrooms, striving to complete their latest creations. These chambers are filled with long workbenches that contain any tool necessary for carving, filing, sanding, sawing, shaping, and other such tasks related to the working of wood, stone, or metal.

10. Stairs to Upper Level

Stairs at the end of each of these corridors lead to the upper level, which has temple offices, living quarters, and additions to the library.

11. Griffon Perch

Like the gold dwarves of Eartheart, the Gondsmen rely on griffons to travel quickly throughout the East Rift in times of emergency. Reachable only from the upper level, the griffon perch juts out from the northwest corner of the Crafthouse, providing a safe area for the creatures' takeoffs and landings.

Amid the cantankerous beasts is an unusual sight: a half-finished mechanical griffon built by the gnome artificer Lathee. She often comes up to the perch to tinker with her latest masterpiece, but at present the clockwork griffon remains inert and unable to fly.

Adventure Hooks

You can use one of the adventure hooks below to introduce the Crafthouse of Inspiration and the famous Gondsmen that dwell there to your campaign.

Ygstrazi on Trial: The dwarves of Eartheart have accused Ygstrazi, drow wizard and the head librarian of the Crafthouse, of high treason, claiming that he has been leaking information to his fellow drow in the Underdark. The evidence against him seems convincing, but Cavandro, certain of Ygstrazi's innocence, refuses to surrender his friend to the Deep Lords for trial. Perhaps the adventurers can get to the bottom of this mystery and determine the truth of the charges.

Lathee's Mysterious Power Source: The gnome artificer Lathee has yet to find a suitable power source for her mechanical griffon, but recent intelligence suggests that a mysterious red crystal found in the Underchasm might be the missing ingredient she needs to make it fly. Unfortunately for her, a collective of mind flayers is harvesting the red crystal, no doubt for some nefarious purpose. Will the adventurers brave the illithid scourge to bring back a sample of the red crystal for Lathee to examine? And what are the illithids planning to do with this crystal?

Tanri's Missing Formulas: While going through her records, Tanri Brightwind, a windsoul genasi cleric of Gond, as well as a master alchemist, has noticed that some of her more dangerous alchemical formulas have gone missing. Even worse, recent reports of several grisly murders suggest that someone is using her concoctions to assassinate important people in the city of Eartheart. Can the adventurers bring the assassin to justice and return the stolen formulas?

Thorik and the Secret of Flowstone: Thorik Stonesinger, a gold dwarf artificer and a master stonemason, has heard rumors of a strange new substance found in a ruined city in the Underchasm near the jungles that line its northern edge. This rock, called flowstone, supposedly turns into liquid whenever someone channels magic through it. If that rumor is true, flowstone can become an invaluable tool for stonemasonry. Yuan-ti cultists of Zehir have occupied the ruins, however, and show no signs of leaving. Thorik seeks a sturdy group of adventurers to drive the yuan-ti out of the city and secure the site for the Crafthouse.

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Doug Hyatt is a writer and game designer living in Tennessee. This is his first article for *Dungeon*.

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DARK SUN
CAMPAIGN SETTING

Eye on Dark Sun

House of the Mind

By Rodney Thompson

Illustration by Chad King

Teaching the Way, the art of manipulating psionic power, is forbidden in the city of Draj. By the sorcerer-king's decree, the only place to learn psionics is at his own academy, called the House of the Mind. There, Tectuktitlay personally oversees the training of future masters of the Way. Though none but Tectuktitlay can know his motivations, whispers spread throughout the city-states that the sorcerer-king is cultivating a private army of psionicists to unleash upon his enemies. Other rumors claim that Tectuktitlay is building a psionic priesthood to speed his transformation into a dragon and thus challenge the Dragon of Tyr.

The school's headmaster, an elderly human named Ixtabai, oversees a staff of lesser and greater masters of the Way, as well as a handful of templars who act as the school's instructors. All the masters at the school are former students who managed to graduate to advanced ability, and each is said to possess secret techniques that only he or she is privy to. Many of the students regard Ixtabai as a figurehead, but the rest of the staff obeys his instructions with good reason: Ixtabai has planted subtle psionic traps in the minds of his students, so that if one becomes problematic the aging mentor could simply trigger the trap, rendering the subject mindless.

Despite the influence Ixtabai holds over the staff and the students, Tectuktitlay is the unquestioned master of the school, and the sorcerer-king takes a direct hand in training even the newest recruits. Rumors abound that the sorcerer-king uses this opportunity not only to instruct the students, but to probe their minds, though what he seeks only Tectuktitlay knows. Some believe that he is searching for signs of sedition, hoping to uncover members of the Veiled Alliance who would dare to infiltrate the school. Others hold that Tectuktitlay is searching for a spark of potential that the sorcerer-king could mold into a powerful weapon, the coming of which he has seen by gazing into the future.

Regardless of what the sorcerer-king is searching for, only a handful of students have any real promise. The school instructs some two hundred at any given time, but no more than two dozen of those will go on to become masters of the Way, either remaining with the House of the Mind as instructors or perhaps

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becoming moon priests of Tectuktitlay. Other graduates of the House of the Mind serve in the armies of Draj, providing psionic support to offset their counterparts on the opposing side of the battlefield.

Trials of Training

The training methods used in the House of the Mind are notoriously harsh, and many students do not survive the process. Life in the academy puts incredible stress on the minds, bodies, and spirits of students, pushing them to their limits.

By Tectuktitlay's command, Draj's noble families send their sons and daughters to the House of the Mind for training. Many fear that they will never see their children again, so dreadful is the reputation of the academy. Some look for ways to avoid this fate, hiring agents to smuggle their children out of the city or arranging for apprenticeships in distant client villages loyal to Draj. Most of the talented young apprentices to be found in client villages are noble children who escaped training at the House of the Mind, making them tempting targets for raiders looking for a ransom.

All students of the House of the Mind live on the grounds during their training, even those whose families have estates within Draj. This arrangement gives the instructors ongoing access to the students and allows Tectuktitlay to keep a close eye on those he is arming with mastery of the Way. Students consider the academy to be almost a prison; anyone caught sneaking out is severely punished. Some noble youths studying at the House of the Mind pay handsome sums to have contraband smuggled in—or themselves smuggled out, even for a brief time.

Some instruction at the House of the Mind follows traditional methods of example and study, but much of the training regimen focuses on head-to-head competition. Under Tectuktitlay's direction, the masters of the school pit student against student in contests of psionic might, a dangerous practice that results in frequent injuries and deaths. These intense confrontations sometimes spill out over the walls of the House of the Mind, at times when two particularly powerful students are pitted against each other. On such occasions, Moon Priests have been forced to intervene to prevent further damage to the city.

Punishment for failure in the House of the Mind is extremely brutal. For the fortunate, it consists of mere physical abuse (and, if Tectuktitlay is the instructor, a quick death), but other methods are mentally torturing, trapping the student in a prison of his or her own nightmares to be tormented by psionic constructs. Sometimes the instructors are careless, and the student never emerges from this nightmare state; only another group of masters can delve into the psychic dungeon to rescue the imprisoned mind.

House Grounds

The House of the Mind's physical structure resembles that of a fortress. Set close by the walled compound at the heart of Draj known as Two Moon City, the academy is well protected by Tectuktitlay's most loyal servants. Getting inside is as difficult as infiltrating Two Moon City, and only the most skilled thieves and adventurers would risk such a task. The squat building has guards posted at all entrances, few of them carrying physical weapons—a fact that reinforces the threat posed by the psionic masters of the House of the Mind.

Half of the building consists mainly of student dormitories. Up to twenty students are assigned to a single unadorned room filled with bunk beds stacked four high. On the opposite side of the courtyard at the center of the academy are the masters' quarters. Ixtabai has his own small house on the grounds as well.

Most instruction takes place in one of five training chambers. In the Chamber of Pyrokinesis, students learn and practice the ability to manipulate fire with their minds. The Chamber of Clairsentience is where students learn to extend the mind's eye to perceive far-off places. In the Chamber of Telepathy, students practice touching the minds of others while warding themselves against psionic attack. The Chamber of Psychometabolism trains students to use their minds to manipulate and transform their bodies. In the Chamber of Psychoportation, students practice moving objects both small and large with the power of the Way.

Alternative Rewards

Those who survive their time at the House of the Mind usually emerge with at some amount of mastery over the Way. The following two Secrets of the Way are new non-item rewards that you can give to player characters who spend time studying at the House of the Mind. See *Dungeon Master's Guide 2* for how to use alternative rewards.

Mind of Two Moons

Those who survive training in the House of the Mind are better able to defend themselves against mental attacks, even creating a bit of feedback that can muddle the mind of the attacker.

Mind of Two Moons **Level 6 Uncommon**

You have so disciplined your thoughts at the House of the Mind that your mental defenses lash out instinctively.

Alternative Reward: Secret of the Way 1,800 gp

Property

You gain resist 5 psychic.

Attack Power (Psychic) ✦ **Daily** (Immediate Interrupt)

Trigger: An enemy attack hits your Will.

Effect: The attack misses you. The triggering enemy takes 2d10 psychic damage, and it is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Chosen of Tectuktitlay

Students who show the most promise are taught dangerous combat techniques by Tectuktitlay. Those who earn this rare blessing are able to strike at their enemies' minds and prevent them from retaliating in the same fashion.

Chosen of Tectuktitlay **Level 12 Rare**

As one of Tectuktitlay's favored students, you have learned techniques to crush the minds of those who oppose you.

Alternative Reward: Secret of the Way 13,000 gp

Properties

✦ You gain 2 additional power points.
✦ You gain a +2 item bonus to Will.

Attack Power (Psychic) ✦ **At-Will** (Standard Action)

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +16 vs. Will
Hit: 1d10 + 7 psychic damage, and the target cannot make attacks against your Will until the end of your next turn.

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Rodney Thompson is an RPG designer at Wizards of the Coast, originally from Chattanooga, Tennessee. His credits for the Dungeons & Dragons® game include *Monster Manual® 3*, the *Dark Sun® Campaign Setting*, *Heroes of the Fallen Lands™*, *Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms™*, and *Monster Vault™*.

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EBERRON

Eye on Eberron

Daask

By Keith Baker

Illustration by Tyler Jacobson

Khorvaire was a land of monsters long before it was home to humanity. The Dhakaani Empire of the goblins thrived for thousands of years, and it took the horrors of Xoriat to tear it down. When humans first came to Khorvaire, they enslaved the weakest creatures and drove those they couldn't control to dark places and wild frontiers. Most of the greatest cities of the Five Nations have always had a goblin underclass, but as of a century ago the typical Brelish citizen had never seen a minotaur or a gargoyle.

The rise of the nations of Droaam and Darguun has drawn the monsters out from the shadows. Yet it is House Tharashk that has brought these creatures to the Five Nations. During the Last War, House Tharashk used its connections with Droaam to broker the services of monstrous mercenaries—a lucrative business that gave the young house an edge against rival Deneith. Not all of these hirelings were sent to war. Gargoyles are wonderful couriers in a city of towers, and ogres' strength is an excellent tool for hard labor. The Daughters of Sora Kell receive a share of Tharashk's revenue from this trade, and most of these laborers are assigned a term of service by the hags; whether driven by national pride or fear of their distant leaders, they are often more reliable than local human workers. As these honest monsters have become more common in the cities of the Five Nations, this trend has opened the door for their dishonest cousins. The cartel known as Daask first appeared in Sharn in 988 YK. Over the last five years it has spread to Wroat, Passage, Starilaskur, Ghalt, and Lathleer, and a cell is laying down roots in Fairhaven.

Daask Lore

Any player character who lives in a district where Daask is active automatically knows the DC 10 information.

Streetwise DC 10: Over the last decade, the Daask syndicate has carved out a bloody niche in the criminal underworld of Aundair and Breland. Its members are monsters, ranging from goblins and ogres to more exotic creatures. Daask primarily operates in slums, ghettos, and other areas where the law is lax and its monstrous forces attract less attention.

Streetwise DC 15: Daask has three primary rackets: protection, loan sharking, and illicit alchemical substances.

When people think of Daask, the protection racket is what generally comes to mind. A sly goblin arrives

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at a merchant's shop with an ogre towering over him. The goblin laments the constant threat of violence in the area and offers peace of mind in exchange for a weekly fee. Strangely, Daask often delivers on its promises. Most of the violence perpetrated by Daask is directed against other criminals. Rival gangs are met with brutal force, while burglars and thieves are tracked down by gnolls and worgs. Because Daask operates in relatively lawless areas, there are those who appreciate this harsh justice.

Daask's loan sharks have stores of raw gold from the mines of Droaam, and are quick to offer it to those in need. Collateral is required, and the most infamous practice is the "stone loan." A Daask medusa petrifies a member of the borrower's family, and a shattered toe or similar trophy is sent to the borrower for each missed payment. There are stories of medusas shipping unclaimed victims back to Droaam to be auctioned in the markets.

The alchemical trade has put Daask in direct competition with other criminal gangs. In addition to dreamlily and other narcotics, Daask has one unique product: dragon's blood, a mysterious and highly addictive substance that enhances arcane powers.

Streetwise DC 20: Daask makes its home in the depths. The largest cities of the Five Nations are built on Dhakaani foundations, and Daask's bases are renovated subterranean fortresses. Outsiders are rarely invited into these havens; instead, a city will have a location where a Daask spokesperson can always be found. In the city of Sharn this is Shamukaar in Khyber's Gate, a combination tavern and butcher shop for Droaam refugees. It's rumored that Daask's carnivorous soldiers bring their kills to Shamukaar to be prepared according to the customs of their homeland.

The composition of Daask cells varies by location. The Sharn cell has strong flying support, while the Passage cell has an unusual number of worgs. Generally gnolls, shifters, and orcs make up the bulk of Daask's forces. Ogres, worgs, minotaurs, tieflings, and gargoyles are found in smaller numbers. More powerful and exotic creatures—harpies, war trolls, lycanthropes, medusas, trained basilisks or cockatrices—are kept in reserve for special occasions, though the threat that they might be available is an effective tool of intimidation. Leaders of Daask cells are exceptional individuals regardless of species. The Sharn cell is directed by an oni named Cavallah, an expert in aerial combat. The medusa Askhora leads the Wroat Daask, while the forces of Passage are commanded by a werewolf named Fell.

Streetwise DC 25: How can monsters engage in violence in the Five Nations without being brought down by the law? Few watchmen are willing to throw away their lives facing a war troll or a medusa; if it has to be done, let the King's Citadel or some elite unit do the work. Beyond that, by staying in the wretched parts of town and focusing its aggression on other criminals, Daask has little obvious impact on upstanding citizens. Beyond this, Daask is surely using some of its ill-gotten gains to bribe the authorities, as the Boromars and others have done for centuries, and Daask has the additional lever of dragon's blood. Quite a few noble wizards and dragonmarked heirs have developed a taste for this mysterious serum, and Daask is the only source.

What They Don't Know

At the moment, law enforcement is looking at Daask only on a local level, seeing its members as monstrous brutes. A clever individual who studies Daask's activities on a larger scale will find evidence that contradicts this image. The actions of the cartel show discipline and foresight. A seemingly random attack might cripple an enemy's resources months after the fact or hurt an opponent in a different city. There is a single entity guiding Daask: Sora Katra. The hag is a legendary schemer, and Daask is her hand in the east. Each cell leader owns a scrying crystal that allows Sora Katra to communicate with that individual at any distance. As a result, all Daask cells are guided by a single vision. Sora Katra knows who is using dragon's blood and who owes gold. With her guidance, her agents are crippling the established criminal guilds. The authorities have little sympathy for the Boromars and their counterparts, but once Daask dominates the underworld the forces of the law might wish they had acted sooner.

The forces of Daask are elite soldiers of Droaam trained to operate in foreign lands. The trolls and ogres might play the roles of brutes, but they have been carefully selected for their intelligence. When dealing with common criminals, raw force might be all that's required, but when there is real danger, Daask troops will pull together. The defining elements of a Daask strike team are its racial diversity and its tactical precision. In Sharn, a troll might serve as a decoy to lure opponents onto a bridge so that the harpy lurking nearby can call them to their doom. A medusa might place petrified beasts around Daask territory that can be released from stone bondage with a word of power. In addition to this brute force, Daask excels at manipulation. The innkeeper who tries to poison the party has been compelled to do it, or else his petrified daughter will be shattered. The sorcerer addicted to dragon's blood will do as Daask wishes, or he'll never taste that nectar again.

The connection to Sora Katra allows Daask to pose a threat to characters at any tier. Aside from the diverse range of monsters they can bring to bear as threats become more significant, Daask soldiers can have access to boons, powerful magic items, or even artifacts drawn from the hoard of the Daughters of Sora Kell. Given the cunning of Sora Katra and the oracular powers of Sora Teraza, an encounter with Daask might be staged purely to place an artifact in the hands of a particular player character to serve some future goal.

DRAGON'S BLOOD

Dragon's blood is a mysterious substance produced in Droaam. So far it has defied mystical analysis; there is some ingredient known only to the Daughters of Sora Kell, and neither House Cannith nor the Arcane Congress has managed to reproduce it. As with an *Eldritch Machine*, the precise effects of dragon's blood are in your hands; they vary by dose and by user. At its simplest level, dragon's blood can serve as a *power jewel* or a *potion of clarity*; however, it could have more dramatic effects, such as providing temporary access to higher-level spells or powers, temporarily providing at-will access to an encounter power, or dramatically amplifying the efficacy of a ritual.

It is also highly addictive. Player characters are remarkable individuals, though, and it might be that the only penalty they suffer is the knowledge of the power the blood can give them. However, lesser individuals might be consumed by their lust for that power. Depending on how significant a role you want the substance to play, dragon's blood could provide Sora Katra with a link to the user's spirit, allowing her to twist the character's powers in a variety of ways. It could be that the reason no one has been able to replicate the serum is because it has no power of its own; its utility comes entirely from Sora Katra herself.

Using Daask

At its simplest level, Daask is a way to justify the presence of monsters in the city. Want to have an encounter with werewolves and a medusa? Figure out how it ties to the goals of Daask. Soldiers of Daask will be more disciplined than random bandits, but not every encounter has to tie into Sora Katra's grand plans. If you want Daask to play a more significant role, consider the following ideas.

Friends & Family: A player character isn't likely to take out a loan from Daask, or to be running a tavern in Lower Dura. However, no character should exist in a vacuum. Encourage your players to develop the backgrounds of their characters, and see what you can do with this information. Did any of the characters fight in the Last War? Then it's an old war buddy—the company cook—who started that tavern. Where did the rogue learn her skills? Her mentor is working for the Boromar Clan. The wizard's nephew is experimenting with dragon's blood, while the cleric's cousin has been petrified and sent to Droaam—can you track him down? Adventurers are equipped to battle monsters, but there are surely some people among their supporting cast who aren't. Use them to create the foundation of a Daask campaign.

Mob War: Daask is engaged in a ruthless war with other criminal forces in Breland and Aundair. Although the adventurers might have no sympathy for Daask or the cartel's enemies, they or their friends could easily be caught in the crossfire. This can be an easy way to start a session with a bang; the adventurers are relaxing at their favorite bar when Daask forces smash down the door.

The Tharashk Connection: House Tharashk is the youngest of the dragonmarked houses, and one of the most ambitious. Not content with its footholds in prospecting, bounty hunting, and the inquisitive trade, House Tharashk is using its ties to Droaam to challenge House Deneith's long-running stranglehold on the mercenary business. Its connections to Droaam extend further, as the house has acquired lucrative prospecting contracts to help exploit Droaam's natural resources. How far do these connections go? Is Tharashk letting the Dark Pack turn its trackers into werewolves? Is the house intentionally bringing in Daask soldiers and placing them as laborers? If the adventurers have ties to Tharashk, this mission could be a matter of exposing a single corrupt clan within the house; if their ties are to House Deneith, it could be the prelude to a war between the houses.

Dragon's Blood: When House Cannith tasks the adventurers to solve the mystery of dragon's blood, can they track it to its source and discover its true nature? If it does indeed bind souls to Sora Katra, can they find a way to break the hag's connection to her victims?

The Eye: A shifter, half-orc, or changeling character receives an unexpected package: a magical amulet of considerable power. If the adventurer dons the necklace, a voice speaks in his mind. Sora Katra has been watching him, and she wants him to take control of the local Daask cell. She says that the character has a blood tie to a warlord of Droaam, and she believes that he is destined to be a leader of his people. She can guide him, but first he must prove himself in the Five Nations. What does the party do? Daask's enemies are criminals. Will the adventurers take over the local cell and fight these thugs? Could the hag be telling the truth?

About the Author

Keith Baker is an award-winning game designer and novelist best known for his work on the *Eberron® Campaign Setting* and the card game *Gloom*. His most recent novel is *The Fading Dream*, the third in the Thorn of Breland series. Follow Keith on Twitter as @HellcowKeith.

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

ED GREENWOOD'S
Eye on the Realms

Thormil's Secret

By Ed Greenwood

Illustrations by Tyler Walpole

Not all that far east of Wheloon in Cormyr is a small, backroads farm, the holding of one Nars Thormil, that has started to attract some local attention for the steady stream of fat thimdrors it's turning out, all of them bound for the best eateries in Saerloon.

Thimdrors are a breed of oxen that are small, broad-shouldered, splay-footed, and ugly, with bald, triangular, almost reptilian-looking heads. Terrifically strong but short and stupid, they long ago fell out of favor as draft beasts, but when worked steadily they yield marbled meat that's highly prized by hearth-roasters everywhere.

Many of Thormil's neighbors breed and work thimdrors, then sell them to buyers who come by regularly from nearby cities in Cormyr and neighboring Sembia. It's no great surprise that the quiet, reclusive Thormil—who bought a small, run-down farm from the aging, childless widow of Hargon Steelhond, a retired Purple Dragon veteran—would take to rearing thimdrors, too.

What is surprising is that such a small, overgrown holding produces so many fat, prime-condition thimdrors. Thormil recently erected a double-ring palisade ("a fort like the Dragons fought out of, in the olden days," as one local accurately described it) around his tiny barn and cottage, but no beast grazes outside it, and local farmers swear that the yard between cottage and barn was a vegetable garden just big enough to feed Thormil—and that even if the barn was ten times the size it is, it couldn't hold all the feed such a stream of oxen would need to get so plump.

Yet drovers come riding up from Daerovaer's High Hearth dining-hall or the feast-hall of Nundrarl's Haven Inn in Saerloon every two tendays or so—and each time they emerge to lead away a pair of fat oxen. It's almost as if Thormil is doing it by magic. . . .

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A Local Mystery

In Cormyr, wizards (and sorcerers and warlocks, too) need to be registered, and mutterings about Thormil's unbelievable stream of oxen have reached the ears of the local Purple Dragons. Under the command of the stern, gruff, portly, and by-the-rules Ornrion Lhornan Drakehar, these are the soldiers who patrol out of the garrison-keep of Stonewatch at Heldul's Rest, a waystop on the north side of the Way of the Manticore about halfway between Wheloon and Dreamer's Rock (or about a sixth of the way east from Wheloon to the Eastbridge, which carries the trade road across the Darkflow River). Thormil's holding lies a little more than twenty miles north-northeast of "the Rest," along meandering farm lanes that see only local traffic.

The Wizards of War assigned in rotation to Stonewatch have promised to "do a little peering" in Thormil's direction, but their first few forays yielded up nothing other than the strong likelihood that "items of minor lasting magic" are probably present in Thormil's cottage. The same could be said for hundreds of cottages across the realm, where graybeards who were once Purple Dragons keep their former service daggers, given to them upon retirement, that were enspelled to glow like a steady candle-flame when grasped and ordered to do so.

That's not to say that the War Wizards' investigations are by any means done, however. Since the infamous scandals of Ulskan Trollbreeder nigh the Hullack and the Smith's Seven Chained Wives in the far west of the realm, any people who throw up palisades around their homes in Cormyr are going to get thoroughly investigated, sooner or later.

The nearest nobles' seats are Gyrlondposts, the country estates of House Gyrlond, to the east, and Thawngard, home of the reclusive House Thawnfaer, farther off to the southwest. Lord Thawnfaer steps off his own soil seldom, keeping out of the affairs of others, and has curtly dismissed tales of Thormil's unfailing parade of oxen as "none of my affair—nor thine, neither."

The Gyrlonds, however, are interested in anything that smacks of getting rich by farming, and they have sent word to Wheloon that they seek the services of investigator-for-hire "Ironeye" Houndfyre, whom they have employed in the past as their private (not that they would ever use this word) spy. Ironeye has sent word back that he will take their hire the moment he's finished uncovering who lured young Lady Harefollow off to Westgate with promises of marriage—and left her at the temple threshold stripped of all her jewels and travel funds.

What Artifice May Spawn

Thormil doesn't have a herd of thimdrors in prime, fattened condition. What he had was just one such beast—plus his own magical skills, and one of the rare and legendary monsters known as deepspawn.

Thormil is a wizard who hurriedly left his native Zazesspur (and the name he was born with, Althro Vaelhond) after his tutor, the wizard Izmurn Raelane, was killed in a spell duel and his slayer, the mage known only as "the Spellhound," vowed to hunt down all of Raelane's apprentices to leave no loose ends.

Arriving in Cormyr as Nars Thormil, Vaelhond told no one of his talent for the Art. He has never Crown-registered as a wizard, nor publicly practiced magic.

He has no interest in adventuring or in making a good living casting spells for the wealthy in a large city, but prefers to shut himself away from the wider world and devise new spells, endlessly traveling the world of the Art and mastering more and more. In short, he's an explorer of the Art, a crafter of spells.

Yet spellcrafters need to eat and keep warm in winter like everyone else, so Thormil hit upon the notion of using the output of a monster he'd recently found in a cavern network in the wild depths of the Hullack Forest (and captured with his spells, just to see if it could be done) not just to feed himself, but to make some coin. Hence his arrangements with the kitchenmasters in Saerloon, Nuth Daerovaer, and Halomond Nundrarl, and the resulting steady stream of oxen that eventually and inevitably attracted attention from his neighbors.

Though some sages have long believed that deepspawn don't actually create creatures, but rather act as living portals that snatch creatures from elsewhere to appear "out of" the deepspawn, the truth is that deepspawn somehow "record" the anatomy of all the creatures they devour, and replicate it, gleaning the necessary ingredients from their surroundings. (In the wild, deepspawn roam constantly, instinctively taking what they need.) A deepspawn that can't get what it needs to spawn won't spawn until it does. If one is wallowing amid the dead and dying of a battleground, it can spawn every three days, but normally these monsters spawn every 4d6 days.

Deepspawn can create exact duplicates only of creatures they have devoured. Spawn issue forth with an intense, inborn loyalty to their deepspawn parent, but will be sent away to live on their own by the deepspawn unless food is plentiful for them to survive. Some deepspawn keep company with a few (typically 1d4) of their spawn to use them as servants, defenders, or lures for other prey (or even to eat, if food grows scarce). Other deepspawn prefer to roam alone, and always send their spawn away, or retain only monstrous spawn that fight formidably, to deal with numerous foes.

The raw materials a deepspawn needs to generate and birth a spawn are lots of water, certain minerals (usually taken from devoured or crushed rocks, but sometimes just scraped off rock walls), tiny amounts of certain plant life (substances from mosses, lichens, or fungi), blood from living creatures they devour,

bones of dead or living creatures they devour and dissolve, and dung (human will do, so Thormil never has to dig himself new privy pits and move the outhouse). Deepspawn can store gleaned ingredients within their bodies for long periods, and seem to need little or no light as a spawning ingredient.

Who Is Nars Thormil?

After his well-schooled apprentice days, Nars Thormil rose rapidly into a powerful self-taught wizard (precise level and spells unknown). His daily life is driven by the thrill of exploring and mastering ever more magic, and as a result he is usually unwashed and unshaven, may be barefoot, and is clad in whatever he bothered to throw on (and not necessarily fasten). He eats and drinks "in passing" from his own stores only (much of it brought by his Saerloonan kitchenmaster clients), usually eating raw food and never sitting down for meals.

In short, he is obsessed with magic, over all else. Which is not to say that he is oblivious to the outside world (such as the peril of Cormyr's War Wizards), or that he drifts through his days having no aims or direction at all.

Thormil was taught that the Spellplague shattered magic as we know it, making it obvious to those who think clearly (such as himself) that new and better systems of magic are needed. Thus, he's searching for a mastery of magic that will make him truly mighty (and he doesn't think that any single approach will succeed, so he needs to keep tinkering with everything), in order to establish a land of order and ease, where "a new magic" will rule and where life will be better for all, a place where those gifted in the Art can gather and experiment to devise ever more powerful magics.

If Thormil can find breakthroughs swiftly, and can co-opt the War Wizards to accept his vision, Cormyr would be an ideal place for this land of order under the new magic—but if the Forest Kingdom's lawkeepers try to imprison, destroy, or control him, he's ready (with traps, magic items "on trigger," and "hanging" spells) to defeat them and flee elsewhere. In such a case, he might take refuge in a remote wilderness area with Underdark connections, so he can get another deepspawn to take care of his culinary needs.

About the Author

Ed Greenwood is the man who unleashed the Forgotten Realms® setting on an unsuspecting world. He works in libraries, plus he writes fantasy, science fiction, horror, mystery, and romance stories (sometimes all in the same novel), but he is happiest when churning out Realmslore, Realmslore, and more Realmslore. He still has a few rooms in his house in which he has space left to pile up papers.

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Temple of the Weeping Goddess

A D&D® adventure for level 0 characters

By Philippe-Antoine Menard

Illustrations by Tyler Jacobson and Kieran Yanner

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Introduction

In "Temple of the Weeping Goddess," a group of gifted orphans are sent by their mad caretaker to a ruined temple in the Elemental Chaos. They are tasked with rescuing the long-lost aspect of the goddess Avandra, who decades ago destroyed the temple. Freeing her from her self-made prison is going to be the fledging adventurers' first test as heroes.

To complicate matters, the temple is being ransacked by a crew of recently marooned goblin pirates led by an unseen being called the Storm Prince. The goblins are scouring the ruins for a treasure and a way out.

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Rules for creating and playing level 0 characters can be found in "A Hero's First Steps" (*Dragon* 403). After completing this adventure, the characters advance to level 1.

Adventure Background

Decades ago, a slave ship returning from a successful raid was caught in a storm and beached on a small island. In the resulting chaos, the slaves subdued their captors and explored the island, which at the time was the theater of a vicious skirmish between orc and goblin raiders.

While exploring, the new adventurers discovered an ancient temple dedicated to Avandra. There, an aspect of Avandra warned them she was soon going to destroy the island because of the defilement of her temple by the raiders. The adventurers escaped the island before it was ravaged days later, leaving nothing but a polished stone islet jutting above the surface of the choppy sea.

Among those fleeing survivors was Denek, a young half-elf fisherman. Profoundly moved by Avandra's appearance, he embraced her faith and became an adventuring cleric. He had a long and fruitful career, but as he rose in power and grew closer to his deity's essence, he sensed something was wrong. He never had reconnected with that passionate aspect of Avandra who unleashed her divine wrath on that island so long ago, and he thought something had been taken from his beloved deity when that island was scoured clean.

After his retirement as an adventurer, Denek spent several years in research before finding what he sought. When the island was destroyed, the temple and its immediate surroundings sank into the Elemental Chaos, pulling in with it a sliver of Avandra's essence. That aspect of the goddess remains there, still as full of wrath as Avandra herself was on the day the island left this world.

By the time he unearthed this knowledge, Denek was too old to undertake a rescue mission himself. Thus, he devised a plan to reenact his original encounter with the aspect of Avandra: He would send a band of handpicked youngsters to the aspect with the goal of appeasing her and releasing her from her self-imprisonment. Denek founded a seaside orphanage in an old lighthouse. He then sought out and raised gifted orphans from throughout the realms and groomed those who he felt showed promise for his ultimate mission.

Now, perhaps in the last days of his natural life, Denek plans to send his proteges into the Elemental Chaos, trusting them to succeed and survive.

Adventure Synopsis

The characters, all teenaged orphans, begin the adventure in a spot of trouble in the streets of a nearby port city. Chased by angry tavern patrons, they make their way back to their orphanage, where they are summoned by their aging caretaker. Expecting to be chastised, they are instead asked to undertake a strange and dangerous mission into the Elemental Chaos: reason with and recover an aspect of Avandra, trapped there by her own dark emotions.

Stepping into a portal, the fledgling heroes emerge onto a floating expanse of rock on which rests a ruined temple. While they search for the aspect of Avandra, they come in contact with a band of marooned goblin pirates led by a cunning captain named Drogto. The goblin pirates are following the orders of a mysterious, hidden being called the Storm Prince, who is exhorting them to recover a treasure he calls the Amulet of Storms, believed to lie somewhere in the temple. While the party explores the temple, it must deal with the goblins, either through negotiation or battle. The party might eventually discover the strange secrets of the Storm Prince and face the weeping aspect of Avandra, trapped by the events that brought her to this chaotic plane.

After the adventurers successfully free the aspect from her self-inflicted curse, they need to deal with the remaining goblins while everyone is rushing to leave the plane.

Preparing for the Adventure

To use this adventure, you and your players need to apply the rules for creating and playing level 0 characters as given in "A Hero's First Steps." All characters are in their early teens (or the nonhuman equivalent for other races). After generating their characters, the players should come up with stories about how they came to be sent to an orphanage.

Though most of the adventure takes place in the Elemental Chaos, you do not have to know any more about the plane than what is provided here. If you want to play up the turbulent environment, see "Earthmote Encounters," page 7.

Familiarize yourself with the entire adventure before you introduce your players to it. Once the characters arrive at the temple, they might gain access to the interior by a number of different routes, so you need to be prepared for any contingency.

Setting the Adventure

Although most of the adventure takes place in a stable pocket of the Elemental Chaos, the lighthouse orphanage can be set in any continent-based seaside town, on a large island or somewhere in an archipelago. The original temple was on such an archipelago featuring both inhabited islands and wild islands. For those playing in the Forgotten Realms® campaign setting, the Moonshae Isles are perfect for both the orphanage and the original emplacement of the island temple. In the Eberron® setting, you can place

the orphanage near Stormreach or any smaller settlement on the Skyfall Peninsula. The sunken island could have been anywhere in Shargon's Teeth.

Quest

Given the special nature of playing level 0 characters, this adventure has only one quest:

QUEST: FREE THE WEEPING ASPECT
Level 0 Quest (Level Up)
To complete the quest, the characters must convince the weeping aspect of Avandra to return to the natural world. As their reward, Denek pays all fees for the characters to obtain training and become level 1 adventurers.

Events

The adventure includes four events that occur in order, during which time the characters explore Avandra's ruined temple in the Elemental Chaos. In Event 1, the characters start knee-deep in trouble in the port city of Korimm's Cove, trying to flee back to the orphanage and avoid capture by a band of adventurers. In Event 2, the party is summoned by their caretaker, who asks them to perform a special quest. Event 3 covers the party's arrival on an earthmote in the Elemental Chaos, the exploration of the lost temple of Avandra, and the encounters with the marooned goblins and the angry, grieving aspect of Avandra. Finally, Event 4 pits the characters against the remaining temple occupants as the desperate goblins try to intercept the heroes before they can get back to the portal.

Event 1: Trouble in Korimm's Cove

Skill Challenge Level 0 (1 or 2 Experience Tokens)

The characters start play making an expeditious exit from a harborside tavern in Korimm's Cove. One of their usual schemes to fleece inebriated patrons blows up in their faces, and who they thought were easy-to-roll merchants turned out to be doughty types who do not appreciate being the victims of a con.

Light: Bright light.

When you are ready to begin, read:
Life is boring at the orphanage in the old lighthouse outside the city walls. You've long abandoned the hope of ever finding families and have instead bound together as a tight gang of loyal friends. To while away the time, you sneak out whenever you can to pull harmless stunts and small cons on the citizens of Korimm's Cove.

However, this last trick you tried to pull at the Drowned Fish tavern didn't work out as planned—your marks were not inebriated merchants, but rather a group of seasoned adventurers. Now you're scrambling into the streets of the city, with six drunk, very angry individuals chasing you.

This scene pits the characters against six adventurers chasing after them in the streets of Korimm's Cove. This is played as a skill challenge where the goal is to lose each pursuer through speed and cleverness before any character gets caught and thoroughly thrashed.

This challenge is somewhat free-form, and what's outlined below serves as an example of how the characters can go about it. You should add to it if players make suggestions that are not covered below and adjust the consequences of successes and failures accordingly. The challenge should cover an hour or so of in-game time.

The challenge assumes that the characters attempt to stick together throughout the chase. If they decide to split up, adjust the impacts of failure accordingly and inform them that characters who are separated from the group can't benefit from anyone else's aid.

Run Away! Run Away!

Angry shouts rise behind them when the characters scramble into the busy seaside streets of Korimm's Cove. It's time for them to lose their pursuers and get back home.

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Athletics, Acrobatics, Stealth, Streetwise.

Athletics (DC 12, two successes maximum): The character ducks and weaves, jumps over a merchant stall, or climbs out of reach, trying to frustrate the adventurers and get them to give up.

Acrobatics (DC 12, two successes maximum): The character lets the pursuers catch up, then at the last minute vaults, tumbles, or slides underneath a convenient obstruction, such as a cart full of rotting fish or horse manure.

Stealth (DC 12 if separated, DC 19 if with party, three successes maximum): The character leads one angry chaser away from the group, leaving him confused and fuming in a dark alleyway.

Streetwise (DC 12, one success maximum): The character recognizes someone nearby who owes him or her a favor, and the character steers the chase in that direction. The friend inserts a convenient obstruction between the characters and their pursuers, causing one of the pursuers to give up.

Secondary Skills: Diplomacy, Insight, Perception.

Diplomacy (DC 8): By assuming a nonthreatening posture and trying to calm the angry adventurers, the character manages to make them pause

momentarily, granting a +2 bonus to the next check in the challenge.

Insight (DC 8): The character slows down long enough to get a good look at one of the pursuers and figures out a potential weakness to exploit, granting a +2 bonus to the next check in the challenge.

Perception (DC 12): The character spots an alley, an open doorway, or some other feature of the immediate surroundings that offers a better chance of losing the pursuers. If the next check in the challenge is failed, the player can roll again.

Success: Each success on a check using a primary skill represents one of the six pursuers dropping out of the chase. When the last pursuer is taken care of, each character receives two experience tokens.

Failure: Each failed check in the challenge represents a different turn of events.

First Failure: One character gets separated (player's choice) and can't aid others or benefit from aid until he or she is reunited with the group. If the party succeeds on the challenge before incurring a second failure, the character rejoins the group just as the final successful check is made.

Second Failure: A separated character gets caught and dragged into a back alley for a good thrashing. If the party succeeds on the challenge before incurring a third failure, city guards interrupt the angry adventurers before the character gets hurt.

Third Failure: If the party incurs a third failure, the caught character gets severely beaten (0 hit points, but stabilized) and left in the gutter, to be discovered soon thereafter by his or her comrades. When the group is together again, each character receives one experience token.

Canceling a Failure: Whenever a first or a second failure occurs in the challenge, a player can use his or her next successful skill check to either count toward finishing the challenge or to cancel out the failure that was just incurred and bring the challenge back to its previous state or close to it. For example, after the first failure in the challenge causes a character to be separated from the group, a success by the next character makes a check means that the separated character managed to relocate the group before being caught.

After the challenge, the characters eventually all make it back to the orphanage, possibly with cuts and bruises.

Treasure: Regardless of success or failure, the characters come away from this experience with a total of 25 gp worth of coins and small gems they managed to con the adventurers out of.

Event 2: "You Are Ready for the Task"

Roleplaying Encounter Level 0 (1 Experience Token)

Shortly after the characters return to the lighthouse, they are summoned by the caretaker, Denek. Instead of berating them, he presents his plan to send them on a quest into the Elemental Chaos.

When you are ready to begin, read:

Shortly after you return from the city, you hear the summoning bell in your chambers calling you to Denek's office. Denek is a gentle soul who has dedicated his whole life to the service of Avandra, goddess of luck and adventurers. He usually finds your stories and excuses amusing, but you expect to be disciplined for your last escapade.

As you climb the stairs of the old lighthouse and enter your caretaker's office at the top, you can't help but think about how old and tired the half-elf priest has looked these last few weeks. A worried smile spreads on his face as he beckons you all in. "It's time we talk, my young, impetuous ones. You are ready for the task."

Denek, Caretaker of the Orphanage

Denek is a half-elf cleric of Avandra (and a retired adventurer) well into his nineties. Gentle and generous, he has shown nothing but care and love for the generations of children under his protection.

Key Traits: Gentle, passionate, and obsessive about his quest.

Goal: To send his most promising pupils to rescue the imprisoned aspect of Avandra, trapped in the Elemental Chaos.

Motivation: Blind love for his goddess and an irrational longing to reestablish her more temperamental essence in the world.

Fears: The aspect of his goddess might not be freed before he dies of old age.

Weaknesses: His advanced age, although it has not affected his mental faculties. Also, his obsession has blinded him to the dangers that the quest puts before his pupils. He downplays the risks of the mission if he is asked for details.

Mannerisms and Physical Characteristics: A soft-spoken, white-haired, beardless grandfatherly type. He gets passionate and energetic whenever he refers to the quest or his past. He becomes tired and distracted whenever the subject veers away from his obsession.

Denek apologizes to the characters and reveals that he has had hidden motives for founding this orphanage twenty or so years ago. He's been looking for promising children who have the potential to become great heroes so he could groom them to achieve that potential. He did so because he has a special personal quest that needs to be performed by his best proteges: the characters.

As Denek explains, read or paraphrase:
"Many years ago, before I became an adventurer, I was captured by pirates. When their ship was wrecked on an island during a storm, I escaped along with a few others, and we discovered an ancient temple of Avandra that was being desecrated by warring orcs and goblins.

"A few days later, the island was destroyed as we rowed away. In the following years, I became a cleric of my beloved goddess but never again did I sense the intensity she showed on that island. It's as if part of her essence was lost along with the island.

"Well, I have found that essence, trapped in another world, and that's what I ask you to do: Bring her back. Do this for me, and I'll give you everything you need to become the great adventurers I know you can be."

What Denek Knows

Denek can relate the following information when questioned.

- The "other world" is the Elemental Chaos, the plane where the elements of creation clash and crash in eternal turmoil.
- Denek will open a portal near the goddess's aspect in a safe and stable pocket of the plane.
- He can't go because he's too weak physically.
- He won't hire seasoned adventurers because he thinks young adventurers filled with potential and passion are more likely to make an impression with the aspect, just as his group did long ago.
- In return for the characters' service, Denek offers to provide any references and cover all the expenses required of them to become full-fledged adventurers.

During the encounter with Denek, additional information can be gleaned by digging a little deeper:

Diplomacy (DC 12): Denek reveals that he feels his death approaching soon and being reunited with the lost aspect of his goddess is his dying wish.

Diplomacy (DC 19): Denek admits that the goddess is likely going to be harder to deal with than she was eighty years ago. She might require strong promises or a sacrifice to bring out of her distraught state.

If the characters balk at undertaking such a dangerous-sounding quest, Denek gets more passionate, all traces of fatigue vanishing from his demeanor. He'll reassure them that it is not as dangerous as it sounds (which is not quite true) and becomes insistent, pointing out that the portal will be kept open so they can come back if the adventurers find the situation overwhelming.

Onward to Adventure

The next morning, when the characters are ready (after a possible quick trip into town to get some supplies), Denek summons them to his office again.

When you are ready to begin, read:
A glowing gray portal stands in the corner of Denek's office. Your old caretaker stands near it, chanting words in a guttural language while holding a dusty book of rituals. Sitting between you and the portal is a low table on which rest several glowing silver finger bands. After a few seconds, Denek stops chanting and sits down, exhausted. In a reedy voice, he whispers, "I did what I could. This portal will stay open for one full day and night. Please put on these bands, enter the portal, and get the goddess back for me."

Treasure: The silver bands are linked to the ritual to allow passage into the portal and back. The enchantment fades after the adventure is completed, but the rings are still worth 25 gp each.

At the end of this encounter, before the characters use the portal, each one receives an experience token.

Event 3: On Distant Stormy Shores

This series of activities covers the exploration of the ruined temple of Avandra and its surroundings, including encounters with the marooned goblin raiders, the Storm Prince, and the aspect of the Weeping Goddess.

When the last character enters the portal, read:
You're violently thrown onto the stony ground of what appears to be an island floating in a storm. Cold winds and rain whip around you, and flashes of lightning and peals of thunder explode all over the gray skies. When you get up, you notice a large, ruined temple taking up half of the surface area of the island. In the distance, you also make out the remnants of a beached sailing ship. A few tents are set near it, and a group of miserable-looking humanoids are huddling together around a smoldering pit.

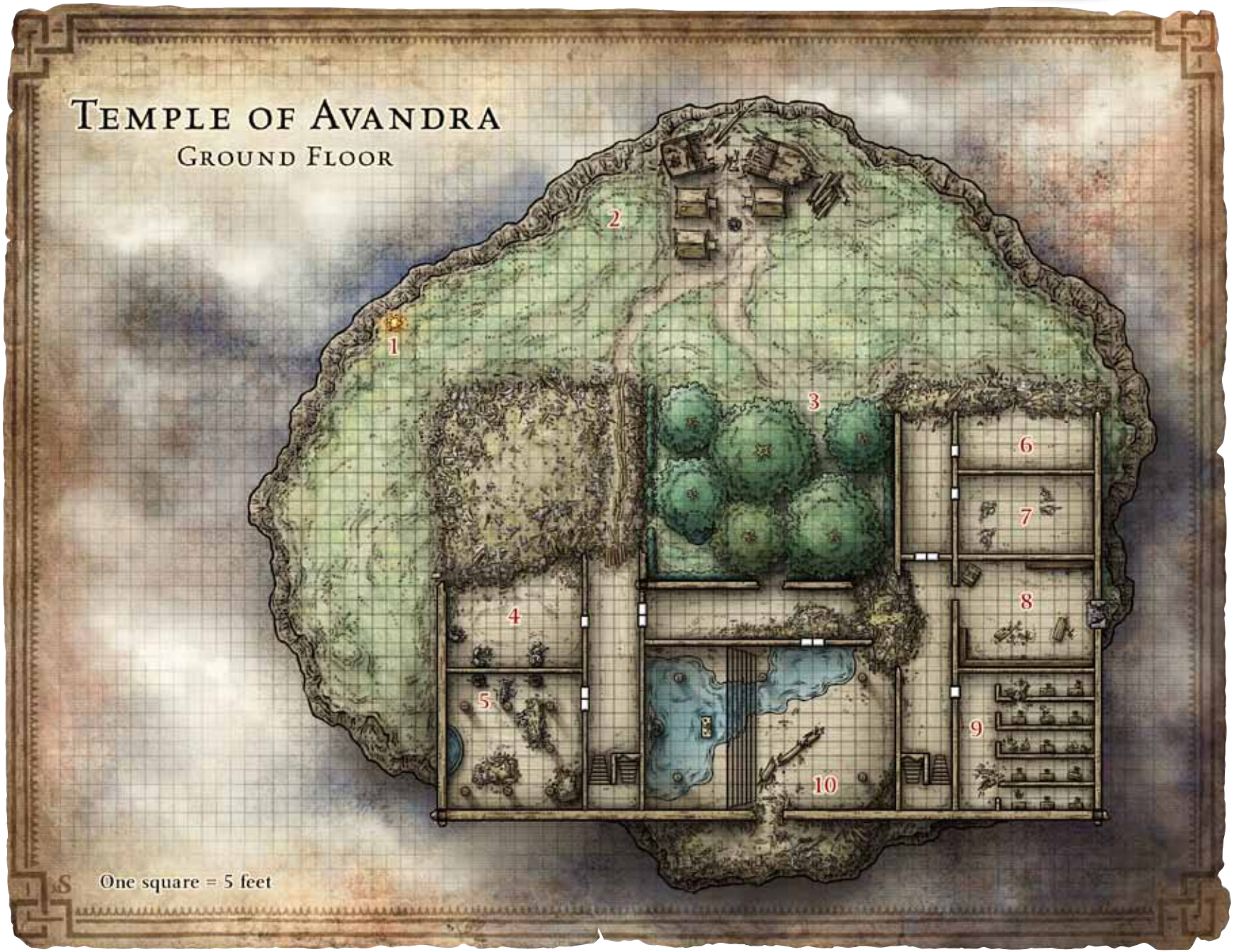
Through the wind and thunder, you hear occasional hints of other sounds. One seems like uncontrollable, high-pitched weeping. Another is a deep, resonating voice barking orders.

The weeping comes from the aspect of Avandra in area 10; it can be heard throughout the earthmote and is incessant.

When the deep voice sounds, a character who succeeds on a DC 19 Perception check can make out snatches of heavily accented Common as some figure shouts about "finding it," and words in another language. Any character who understands the Goblin tongue realizes that the voice is also shouting choice words of abuse in that language.

Climbing on the Temple

The characters are free to explore the surrounding areas. Refer to the map and "Earthmote Encounters" below. Given that the aspect of the goddess is located in an open hall (area 10), the characters could attempt to reach her by climbing the ruins (Athletics DC 12,


Temple of Avandra
Ground Floor
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
One square = 5 feet

failure by 5 or more causes a fall for 1d10 damage) and navigating its fragile roof. If they climb to the top, convey information based on a Perception check:

DC 8: The roof is close to collapsing in many places.

DC 12: The roof areas surrounding the hall at the back are particularly damaged and collapse-prone.

DC 19: The characters can make out a safe path to the hall at the back.

Making their way from any point on the roof of the temple to the top of the hall requires each character to make a successful Athletics check (DC 12, with a +5 bonus if a safe path was identified by an earlier Perception check). A failed check causes the character to fall through the roof and land 10 feet below (dealing 1d10 damage) in an area you deem appropriate.

Earthmote Encounters

The temple sits atop a large island of rock and earth suspended in a stormy gray expense of warm, moist air. The earthmote is periodically subjected to violent thunderstorms and besieged by strong winds and rain. The weather, while unpleasant, does not hamper the characters' actions in this adventure.

EARTHMOTE TRAITS

Type: Elemental realm.

Size and Shape: Finite, ovoid island of rock and earth roughly 300 feet across and 100 feet thick.

Gravity: Elemental buoyancy. The earthmote floats in the air, and everything else is affected by normal gravity. A creature that falls off the earthmote is lost in the Elemental Chaos.

Mutability: Stable.

1. Portal to Denek's Lighthouse

The portal remains barely visible to those wearing Denek's silver rings and is invisible to others. It remains open for 24 hours after the characters first pass through it.

2. The Wrecked Ship

Roleplaying Encounter or Combat Encounter
Level 0 (1 Experience Token)

This is where a goblin sailing ship was wrecked a few days ago after being sucked into an elemental vortex in the natural world.

Recently marooned goblin pirates are fomenting revolt against a mysterious being named the Storm Prince. They no longer want to follow his tiresome exhortations to scour the temple for an artifact he refers to as the Amulet of Storms.

Light: Dim light from the surrounding stormy skies.

Monsters: Drogto, 5 goblin snipers.

As the party approaches the area, read:

As you near the wreck, you recognize it as a light goblin raider, a sloop-like pirate ship, now broken in two on this floating island of rock. Six goblins looking miserable huddle around a pitiful fire near large, crude tents likely fashioned from the ship's sail. A big pile of debris and timber has been stacked behind the tents. The goblins are arguing passionately in their language.

Characters who understand Goblin can determine that the goblins are arguing about rebelling against someone whose name roughly translates as "The Prince of Storms."

If the characters reveal themselves or are spotted, Drogto, the goblins' captain, makes appeasing, peaceful gestures. Although suspicious of them, he is more interested in leaving this place alive than in risking his hide against unknown odds. He sees the characters as a potential escape route, but does not yet know how they can help him.

If he is approached peacefully, Drogto, who speaks passable Common, is willing to parley. If the situation degenerates into combat, Drogto surrenders when he becomes bloodied. Either way, he'll try to bargain what he knows about the island to realize the best possible outcome for him (first) and his crew (second, if at all).

Tactics: If combat breaks out, three goblin snipers retreat behind the nearest cover (tents, debris, or wreckage) and shoot at the characters Drogto attacks. Drogto and two other goblins draw their swords and move in to flank isolated characters. If Drogto surrenders, the other goblins follow his lead.

Treasure: Drogto salvaged 150 gp and 500 sp of pirated loot from his ship. It's stored in a locked iron box (Thievery DC 12 to open) in one of the tents.

Also, at the conclusion of this encounter, each character receives an experience token.

Drogto, Captain of the Blood Raiders

A proud goblin whose cunning and survival instincts made him rise to infamy on the seas.

Key Traits: Quick-witted, charming and persuasive.

Goal: Leave the Elemental Chaos, at whatever cost.

Motivation: Drogto has amassed a sizable fortune in the world and wants to live to enjoy it. He intensely dislikes being someone else's lackey.

Fears: Death and remaining stuck on the island.

Weaknesses: He's too quick to make deals when his life is in danger.

Mannerisms and Physical Characteristics: An affable, if cruel, pirate. He grins and nods constantly. He wears several scars proudly.

What Drogto Knows

Drogto can relate the following:

- An unseen being called the Storm Prince wants Drogto's crew to find a magical amulet.
- The Storm Prince promised to release everyone from this world upon receiving the amulet.
- Though he is invisible, the Storm Prince hears everyone in the temple.
- The goblins have searched almost everywhere but won't return to the temple's main hall because the last group got killed by the "angry goddess made of light."
- He has doubts about the Storm Prince's intent or ability to honor his part of the deal.
- Drogto is willing to share his treasure with the characters if they agree to find where the Storm Prince is hiding and assess his strength.

Characters who express doubts about Drogto's good faith can make an Insight check.

DC 12: Drogto seems genuinely willing to cooperate to save his skin.

DC 19: Drogto is downplaying his strength and biding his time.

If confronted with these observations, Drogto will shrug and grin lazily. He'll point at the character's meager equipment and remark that in the current situation on the island, there's not a lot to gain from going at each other's throats.

"Just make sure it remains like that, friends," he says.

The Storm Prince

The Storm Prince is actually an ambitious young goblin raider that the rest of the crew thought had been killed. He snuck into the temple before everyone else and discovered a partially collapsed room on the second floor where strange elemental wind modulates and amplifies his voice throughout the temple.

After he recognized signs denoting the site as one belonging to Avandra's cult, the goblin recalled an old pirate story about the angry goddess sinking her own temple. The tale described a failed goblin raid to recover a fabled artifact known as the Amulet of Storms. Desperate to leave this rock but unwilling to perform hard labor, the goblin hid and posed as the Storm Prince, a legendary storm giant pirate, in the hope that he could get the others to find the amulet and bring it to him.

Features of the Area

Tents: The tents provide partial cover as long as they are standing. A character in or adjacent to a square that is part of a tent can knock the tent down with a minor action, canceling its cover bonus. As a standard action, a character adjacent to a tent can grab it (whether or not it is standing) and use it to entangle a target adjacent to him or her by making an attack roll (+4) against Reflex. On a hit, the target is blinded and slowed until the end of its next turn while it fights free, destroying the tent in the process. A tent that is knocked down or destroyed becomes difficult terrain.

Campfire: The smoldering campfire provides partial concealment to anyone who enters its square. The fire is not strong enough to cause damage.

Wreck: The goblins have removed any valuables, food, tools and salvageable pieces of timber from their wrecked ship. The remaining skeleton is fragile and unstable, and searching it is risky and requires extra care. A successful DC 19 Perception check is required, and failure by 5 or more causes the wreck to shift dangerously and deal 1d8+3 damage to the searching character. The search reveals a weather-stained woodcut of a young storm giant wearing a crown. The image bears a caption in the Davek script saying "Behold the Might of the Storm Prince" and is worth 5 gp to a buyer interested in giant history. On its flip side, someone engraved "I am the Storm Prince" in Goblin with a dull, fire-heated instrument.

Drogto, Goblin Cutthroat	**Level 1 Skirmisher**
Small natural humanoid	XP –
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15	**Initiative** +5
AC 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13	**Perception** +2
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Short Sword** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage, or 2d6 + 5 if the goblin has combat advantage against the target. In addition, the goblin can shift 1 square.	
Dagger ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d4 + 5 damage.	
Move Actions	
Deft Scurry ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: Drogto shifts up to 3 squares.	
Triggered Actions	
Goblin Tactics ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: Drogto is missed by a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Drogto shifts 1 square.	
Skills Stealth +8, Thievery +8	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+2)	
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 8 (-1) **Cha** 8 (-1)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin	
Equipment leather armor, light shield, short sword, 2 daggers	

5 Goblin Snipers	Level 1 Minion Artillery
Small natural humanoid	XP –
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +3
AC 13, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12	**Perception** +1
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Traits	
Sniper	
If the goblin misses with a ranged attack while hidden, it remains hidden.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
➶ **Shortbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Goblin Tactics ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: The goblin is missed by a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.	
Skills Stealth +8, Thievery +8	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)	
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 8 (-1) **Cha** 8 (-1)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows	

3. The Overgrown Garden

Roleplaying Encounter (1 Experience Token)

A violent splash of colors in this otherwise dreary landscape, this overgrown garden provides the current source of sustenance to the goblins: the fruit growing on the trees, and the pond containing Avandra's tears.

Avandra's Tears

In places around the temple are streams and pools of crystal-clear water created by the weeping of Avandra's aspect. Once per day, a character who drinks Avandra's tears (a minor action) can spend a healing surge and regain 10 hit points instead of the number of hit points he or she would normally regain. The tears do not maintain their curative magic for long, losing their power 1 hour after being removed from their source or being stored in a container (but see area 5 for an exception).

The Dying Goblin

A dying, unconscious goblin lies here, resting pitifully at the base of one of the grand trees of the garden. It barely escaped the temple hall (area 10) after a disastrous raid ordered by the Storm Prince. Abandoned to her fate by her crew mates, this goblin will die within the next day if left untended. A DC 12 Heal check stabilizes her, as does giving her a dose of Avandra's tears.

If healed in any way, she regains consciousness but is terrified at being surrounded by adventurers and screams, "No hurt me, no hurt me!" over and over in broken Common.

She understands enough Common to be calmed down by a character who makes a DC 12 Diplomacy check, Bluff check, or Intimidate check (depending on what players describe their characters as doing). If this check fails, she pretends not to understand Common and tries to flee. If she is calmed, or if she is brought to Drogto in area 2, she can reveal the following.

- ✦ The goddess-made-of-light is very angry! She can pull you to her, freeze you, and makes goblins explode!
- ✦ The goddess's room is filled with fighting rotten bodies and dancing bones.
- ✦ You can safely climb down into the room from a hole on the second floor behind the stairs; a knotted rope was left there.

The goblin has the statistics of a goblin sniper (see area 2).

Treasure: At the conclusion of this encounter, each character receives an experience token.

4. Dormitory

This area used to be the quarters for the temple's male servants. The room has been thoroughly ransacked. The few remaining statues of Avandra have been smashed to bits, and the tiles of a mosaic on the walls were recently gouged out.

5. Goblin Chain Gang

Combat Encounter Level 0 (1 Experience Token)

At one time the quarters for the temple's maids, this room now contains a noisy gang of goblins smashing the place up. Urged by the Storm Prince's incessant cries, the goblins might attack unless they're convinced or coerced by the party not to.

Perception DC 12: When the party approaches the door leading to this room, the adventurers recognize goblin voices shouting at one another over the ambient noises.

Light: Cracks and holes in the walls and ceiling let the outside light seep in. The whole area is lit by dim light.

Monsters: 8 goblin snipers.

When characters look into the room, read:
This immense room looks to have been used as a dormitory for servants. Several rotten beds and mattresses are smashed and gutted. Scurrying goblins are hard at work breaking everything that hasn't been destroyed yet, including a few granite statues of Avandra.

This chamber is currently being ransacked by half of Drogto's crew. Without their leader around, these goblins are more nervous. They'll freeze for a few moments when confronted by the party. Then the Storm Prince screams, "Get them! Put them to work!" in both Goblin and Common. Unless intimidated (a DC 19 Intimidate check) or convinced otherwise (for example, a DC 19 Diplomacy check),

they attack, seeking to cow the characters into submission.

Tactics: As soon as hostilities start, the goblins spread around and take cover. They switch to melee weapons only if they are cornered by characters. Throughout combat, they keep shouting at the characters to drop their weapons and stop fighting.

If three or more goblins are beaten, the remaining goblins surrender and offer to reveal where they think the Storm Prince is hiding (area 12). This situation raises the ire of the unseen tyrant, sending him into a strident rant about treachery and disrespect.

The goblins also reveal this information if they are well treated after being intimidated or convinced not to attack.

Treasure: Discarded in the pile of debris are 2 small sealable copper vials bearing the symbol of Avandra. Each can be used to store a dose of Avandra's tears for up to 24 hours and is worth 2 gp. Finding both requires a DC 12 Perception check.

Also, at the conclusion of this encounter, each character receives an experience token.

If the Goblins Win

If the combat goes badly for the characters and they are captured, Drogto eventually arrives and releases them by (re)negotiating a deal with them. Refer to area 2 for Drogto's motivations.

Features of the Area

Statues: These statues of Avandra, along the right-hand wall as the characters enter the room, are heavily damaged. Their squares are difficult terrain, and they provide partial cover. The fallen statue in the center has the same characteristics as the standing ones.

Columns: The seven columns that support the roof in this area provide superior cover and are blocking terrain. They look badly damaged. As a standard action, a character succeeding on a DC 12 Strength check can make a column collapse, creating a line of difficult terrain 3 squares long. Any creature located in those squares takes 1d6 + 3 damage from the falling debris.

Debris: The goblins have smashed and stacked everything that wasn't bolted down into large piles of wood, stone and assorted junk. These piles provide superior cover and can be climbed with a DC 8 Athletics check, giving perched characters a +1 bonus to melee attack rolls for being on higher ground.

Pool: The pool along the wall opposite the door is filled with Avandra's tears (see area 3).

8 Goblin Snipers	**Level 1 Minion Artillery**
Small natural humanoid	XP –
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +3
AC 13, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12	**Perception** +1
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Traits	
Sniper	
If the goblin misses with a ranged attack while hidden, it remains hidden.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
➶ **Shortbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Goblin Tactics ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: The goblin is missed by a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.	
Skills Stealth +8, Thievery +8	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)	
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 8 (-1) **Cha** 8 (-1)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows	

6. Storeroom

Roleplaying Encounter (1 Experience Token)

This area used to be a storeroom and is partially collapsed. The goblins have ransacked it thoroughly.

The Lost Feline

Stuck in the rubble of the room is a famished cat. It was picked up by the goblin pirates during the raid of a human settlement. Until recently, it was the ship's rat catcher. It got caught in the rubble a few days ago while hunting for food.

A DC 12 Perception check allows a character to hear a faint mewing sound over the noise of the storm, the Weeping Goddess, and the chatter of the Storm Prince.

When the cat is spotted, characters who succeed on a DC 19 Insight check or Perception check discern that the rubble is unstable and that the more people search, the likelier it might shift or collapse. A character can free the cat with a successful DC 12 Athletics check or Acrobatics check, but if the check fails by 5 or more, the rubble shifts dangerously and the cat flees, never to be seen again. Characters cannot aid one another on this check.

If the cat is freed, read:

As you shift the rubble around, seeking the source of the mewing sound, you discover an emaciated tabby cat growling feebly at you, its battered, wet fur raised and fangs showing. It's obviously starving and dehydrated. A brass medal hangs from its frayed leather collar. It bears the inscription "Zelda" in flourished Common script.

The cat can be calmed with a DC 12 Nature check. Giving it something to eat or drink grants a +2 bonus to the check. Using Avandra's tears provides a +5 bonus. After one of the adventurers calms the cat down, it follows that character from then on, brushing against his or her legs and being playful. The cat's

presence grants a +1 bonus to any Perception check made by that character.

If the cat is around when the party enters area 12, the animal proves helpful in uncovering the Storm Prince.

Treasure: At the conclusion of this encounter, each character receives an experience token.

7. Storeroom

This area also used to be a storeroom. The goblins have skipped it because of its contents: a handful of heavily degraded humanoid skeletons strewn about the room. A DC 12 Nature check reveals them to be orc and goblin skeletons that have been dead for a long time, possibly decades. Searching the bodies (DC 8 Perception check) reveals a little quartz idol of a smiling, serene Avandra worth 20 gp.

8. Kitchen

This area used to be a kitchen and has been destroyed by the ravenous goblins. Although nothing of interest can be found here, the collapsed hearth can be cleared with a DC 12 Strength check to create a two-way path in and out of the temple, a useful escape route.

9. Temple Office

This room is a complete mess, containing rotten partitions, broken desks, and smashed religious icons. The goblins spent hours ransacking it but found nothing.

One partial mosaic remains on a wall, showing a joyful goddess blessing cheering sailors departing on a ship. A DC 12 Religion check reveals that Avandra used to be associated with safe sea travels in the archipelago where her temple once stood. This information can be used when dealing with the aspect of the goddess in area 10.

10. Temple of the Weeping Goddess

Roleplaying Encounter and Combat Encounter
Level 0 (1 Experience Token)

This hall is where the aspect of Avandra wails in anguish and pain. The characters must first calm her while fighting the remnants of the temple's original defilers. Then they must help the aspect overcome her grief to convince her to leave the plane.

Light: The aspect shines with a bright, pure white light, illuminating the whole hall.

Monsters: Weeping aspect of Avandra, 4 decrepit skeletons, 2 grasping zombies.

Note: The roof has gaping holes through which intrepid characters can enter or depart. You might have to adjust the description below if the characters enter the temple from the roof.

When characters enter the room read:
Light enters this immense hall through openings in the roof, the remnants of which are supported by five pillars. A sixth pillar has collapsed and now lies broken across the tiled floor. A tall female figure stands opposite you at the top of a broad staircase, glowing with a blinding white light. She cries and curses, rages and bemoans, seemingly in an ongoing state of distress. Tears fall down her face, collecting in a pool at her feet that flows down the marble stairs and puddles near a partly collapsed wall. Above this wall is what remains of a 10-foot-high wooden balcony, its railing shattered or rotting in places.

In the middle of the room, four human skeletons and a pair of goblin cadavers engage in a gruesome dance—a slow, choreographed battle that seems to have no end.

The undead are animated by the aspect's wrathful emotions, doomed to repeat an eternal danse macabre of the temple's last days in the natural world while orc and goblin defilers were looting it.

Characters can lower themselves to the floor of the temple hall in relative peace, either by means of the wooden balcony or through a hole in the wall in one corner (see area 17). If they do so, spread the skeletons and zombies in pairs around the lower tier of the room. It becomes rapidly apparent that the undead are only emulating a fight, rather than actually attacking each other. The undead do not attack unless a character moves adjacent to one, attacks one of them, or confronts the Weeping Goddess (see below).

When the characters address the aspect of Avandra or provoke one of the undead, read:
The goddess's head snaps up, looks in your general direction, and addresses you: "What's this—more defilers? Won't you ever learn to let me grieve in PEACE?"

This encounter combines combat against the undead, which now attack the characters, with having to counteract the aspect's powers through the use of interaction skills.

Tactics: Although they are mindless, the undead are driven by the aspect's emotions. They start attacking the nearest characters. The skeletons favor their swords unless characters remain out of reach. The aspect directs her attacks against different characters each round, spreading her wrath equally among the party.

Treasure: Depending on the outcome of this encounter, the goddess might bestow her *boon of storms* reward upon a character. The book on the altar is worth 150 gp to any Avandra cult.

Also, at the conclusion of this encounter, each character receives an experience token.

The Weeping Aspect of Avandra

Avandra's aspect is not an actual physical opponent in this encounter. She doesn't move and can't be harmed by attacks or magic. She's more like a force of nature, her raw emotions and dwindling divine essence manifesting as powers that act like hazards. She can be talked to, but her responses are barely coherent and somewhat irrational until the characters have overcome the emotional states that fuel her powers. When she calms down, she becomes easier to interact with; see "Convincing the Goddess."

Key Traits: Initially angry and accusatory, distorts everything she sees and hears. Later: Sad, regretful, constantly blames herself.

Goal: Initially wants to be left alone in her grief. Later: To escape her grief and guilt.

Motivation: None.

Fears: None.

Weaknesses: Unable to see the prison created by her own emotions.

Mannerisms and Physical Characteristics: Wracked by inhuman guilt. She interrupts her sentences with long cries of anguish and desperation.

The Aspect's Powers

The Weeping Goddess has two powers that operate as hazards. Each uses a square of the altar as its origin square, acts on its own initiative count, and can be countered by trying to argue, cajole, or calm the goddess out of her state of agitation.

If the players have a hard time figuring how to deal with the aspect, have her ask accusatory questions to the characters as they begin their turns. Based on their answers, ask players if they want to spend minor actions to try to sway her attitude. If they do, ask them what they tell her or what they show her and go from there. Remember to let great roleplaying take precedence over dice rolls.

Help from Other Sources: Successfully using the countermeasures against the goddess's powers requires a couple of skill checks against a hard DC, which could be a tall order. To swing the tide, characters can use the aid another action as normal. The temple also includes three locations that can provide additional help on these checks, if the characters have visited those sites before having this encounter.

1. *Altar:* The altar in this chamber holds a book that can provide a +2 bonus to any checks involving the goddess; see "Features of the Area" for more information.

2. *Mosaic:* If the characters have viewed and understood the mosaic in area 9, that knowledge provides them with a +2 bonus to these checks.

3. *Engraving:* If the characters have examined the engraving in area 15 and deciphered it, they can chant prayers to the goddess during their interaction with her and receive a +2 bonus to their checks.

Aspect of Accusation **Level 1 Hazard**

As the goddess looks over you, you feel the crushing weight of her disapproval and disgust as she bids you toward her to face her justice.

Initiative +4

Standard Actions

Ranged Power ✦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +4 vs. Will

Hit: The target is pulled 3 squares, and it is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Countermeasures

✦ **Prove Innocence:** Bluff or Diplomacy DC 19 (Minor Action). *Success:* The aspect can no longer use this power. *Failure (12 or lower):* The acting creature is pulled 3 squares, and it is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Aspect of Wrath	Level 1 Hazard
A blast of divine energy explodes around you as the weeping goddess shouts, "I said, leave me alone!"	
Initiative +4	
Standard Actions	
Area Power (radiant) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 5 radiant damage, and the target falls prone.	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Assuage Anger:** Religion or Insight DC 19 (Minor Action). *Success:* The aspect can no longer use this power. *Failure (12 or lower):* The acting creature takes 5 radiant damage and falls prone.	

Countering both powers calms the aspect enough to allow meaningful discussions with her.

Convincing the Goddess

After her rage is assuaged, characters can encourage the aspect to break her out of her emotional prison. For this endeavor, every character attempts a DC 12 Diplomacy check, Religion check, or Bluff check. If any one of those checks succeeds, the characters' encouragement abates her guilt enough for her to realize that her prison was of her own making. She promptly destroys any remaining undead, then invites a single character to take her hand (see below).

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

If every character fails the final skill check to bring the goddess out of her state of turmoil, the aspect can't get over what she's done and seems resigned to stay here out of devastating guilt. The characters have one last chance to convince her with heartfelt arguments or promises (for example, becoming a follower of her faith). This is a great opportunity to plant the seeds of future adventures.

If the characters make promises or sacrifice something dear to them, the aspect agrees to leave and offers her hand to the character who made the greatest offer or sacrifice.

Take My Hand

When a character touches the goddess after being invited to do so, read:

As you reach out your hand, the blinding light of the goddess engulfs you. You feel the last remnants of her sadness flow into you and dissipate as she fades into nothingness. As her divine light dims and you slowly recover your sight, you feel the storms abate and calmness spread all around you. You can barely hear her last whispers, as if the gentlest of winds were sounding the words: "Thank you so much, young ones. Now I can return home. I promise to watch over you."

The character who touched the aspect now appears to be wearing an amulet made of platinum and featuring a large shimmering opal. This is the image that the Storm Prince believes to be the Amulet of Storms.

Unfortunately for the misguided goblin, the Amulet of Storms is not a physical object. It is a gift occasionally given by Avandra to promising adventurers who perform special services for her. When she bequeaths it, the gift is initially represented by the image of an amulet made of platinum and sporting a magnificent opal. That illusion quickly fades away into nothingness, leaving Avandra's *boon of storms* on the chosen wearer (see the end of the adventure for details).

Within seconds, the image around the character's neck loses substance and slowly fades away, leaving behind Avandra's blessing. As the pool of Avandra's tears evaporates in a blue mist, everyone feels rejuvenated and rested. Each character gains the benefit of an extended rest.

Features of the Area

Pool of Tears: Avandra's decades of shedding divine tears have created strange distorted effects in this room. Her tears have pooled into a placid puddle (on the stairs as well). Squares containing her tears are difficult terrain. See "Tears of Avandra" (area 3) for more details.

Altar: The altar provides partial cover. An open book rests on it, its pages turning on a regular basis as new writing appears on them. A DC 12 Religion check or Arcana check reveals that the book contains thousands of pages relating the aspect's decades-long litany of guilt and anger. Characters can use it when dealing with the aspect during and after combat. Doing so provides a +2 bonus to all skill checks dealing with her.

Columns: These large, highly eroded decorative columns are blocking terrain and provide superior cover.

Debris: Scattered debris acts as difficult terrain.

Stairs: The stairs are difficult terrain for creatures ascending them, normal terrain otherwise.

4 Decrepit Skeletons	Level 1 Minion Skirmisher
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP –
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +5
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13	**Perception** +2
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The skeleton can shift 1 square before the attack.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
➶ **Shortbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The skeleton can shift 1 square before the attack.	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 3 damage.	
Str 15 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+2)	
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 3 (-4) **Cha** 3 (-4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	
Equipment longsword, shortbow, 20 arrows	

2 Grasping Zombies	Level 1 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP –
HP 33; **Bloodied** 16	**Initiative** -1
AC 13, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 11, **Will** 11	**Perception** -1
Speed 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
Traits	
Zombie Weakness	
A critical hit automatically reduces the zombie to 0 hit points.	
Standard Actions	
Slam ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d12 + 3 damage, or 1d12 + 8 against a grabbed target.	
Zombie Grasp ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The zombie grabs the target (escape DC 12) if it does not have a creature grabbed.	
Triggered Actions	
Deathless Hunger ✦ Encounter	
Trigger: The zombie is reduced to 0 hit points, but not by a critical hit.	
Effect (No Action): Roll a d20. On a 15 or higher, the zombie is instead reduced to 1 hit point.	
Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 8 (-1) **Wis** 8 (-1)	
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 1 (-5) **Cha** 3 (-4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

11. Priest Quarters

This room has not yet been searched by the goblins but shows signs of previous looting. Nothing of interest is in it.

The voice of the Storm Prince (see area 12) is very loud in this room and the adjoining corridors. He'll ask the adventurers to identify themselves and leave this area of the temple or suffer his wrath. Any character challenging or otherwise talking back to the Storm Prince senses the mounting frustration in the prince's voice. A successful DC 12 Insight check reveals that a certain amount of fear has crept into the tyrant's voice.

12. The Storm Prince

Combat Encounter Level 0 (1 Experience Token)

The goblin posing as the Storm Prince resides in this old chamber, hiding under a stone cupola that collapsed from the temple's roof. Two lesser elementals, recently attracted by the noise, have started guarding the room.

Perception DC 12: Characters walking in the corridor outside the room can tell that this is the source of the Storm Prince's voice.

Perception DC 19: Characters in the room can spot movement from underneath the cupola.

Light: Dim light illuminates the room from the partially collapsed roof and missing wall.

Monsters: The Storm Prince (goblin sniper), 1 lesser water elemental, 1 lesser air elemental.

Trap/Hazard: 2 elemental whirlwinds.

The elementals in the room are attuned to the Storm Prince's emotional state. If the characters are spotted approaching, the terrified goblin instantly goes silent and the elementals become dormant.

Characters who sneak around near the entrance of the room and succeed on a DC 19 Stealth check spot both elementals patrolling the room. They also gain a +5 bonus to any Perception checks to spot movement from underneath the cupola.

If Zelda the cat from area 6 is with the party, it makes a beeline for the cupola, causing the Storm Prince to cry in surprise. This commotion gives the party a +10 bonus to spot the goblin struggling with the cat underneath the cupola.

Assuming the characters were spotted, read (otherwise, adjust accordingly):

You enter what was once the chamber of the temple's high priestess. The wall to your right has collapsed, and so has part of the ceiling. The room is divided in two tiers linked by flanking stairways. The lower tier features a few relatively intact statues of Avandra and a large puddle of water. A stone cupola from the temple's roof has crashed down into what used to be a pool in the corner of the room's upper tier. Zooming from one place to the other throughout this area, seemingly at random, are a couple of swirling eddies that carry along debris picked up from the room's floor.

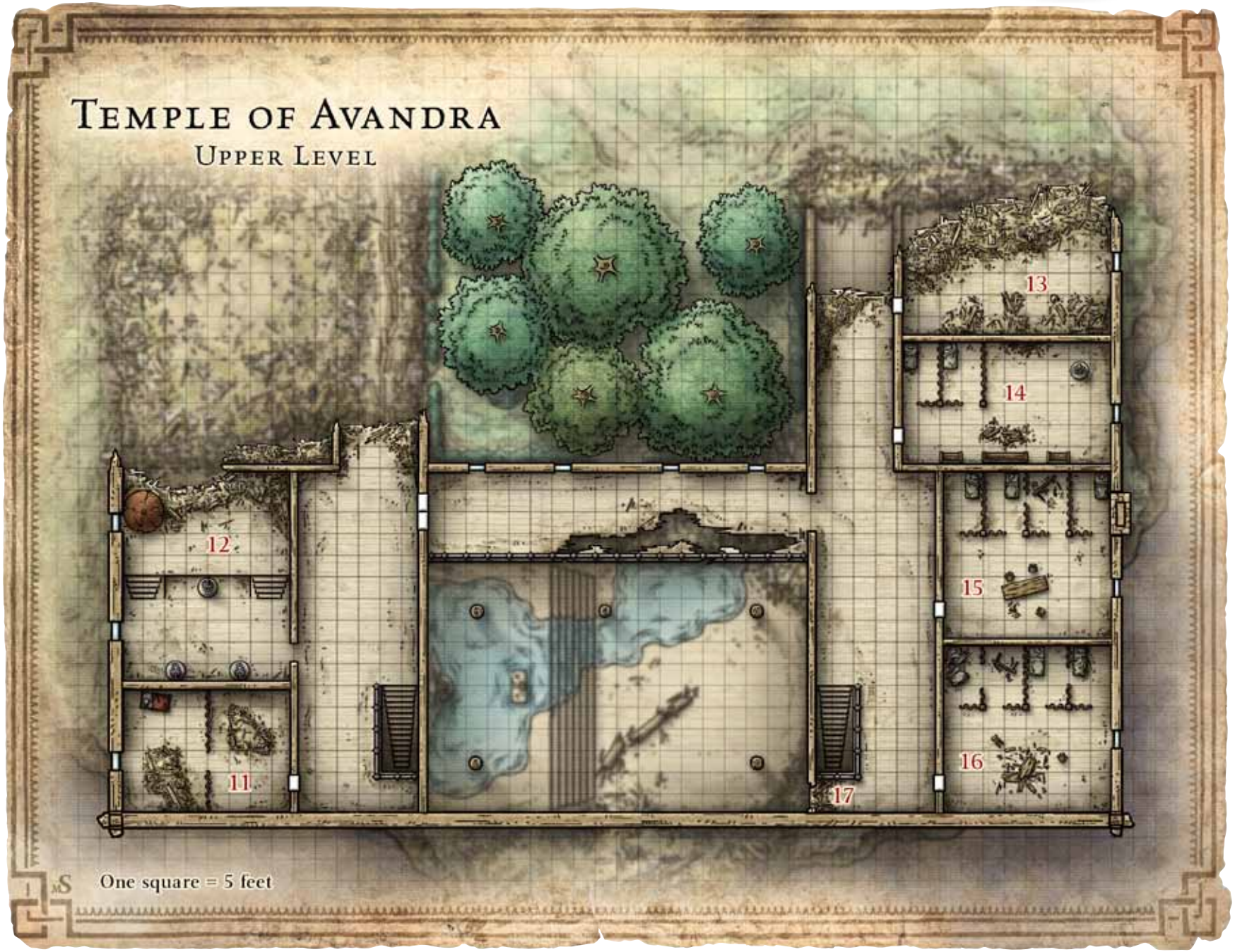
The Storm Prince hopes the characters won't investigate the room, so he remains still, as do the elementals. During their exploration of the room, if the characters spot him or attempt anything that could reveal his hiding place (such as moving to the upper tier), he screams in anger and fear, spurring the elementals into action.

At this point, read:

The voice of the Storm Prince thunders all around you as he shouts, "Leave this holy place now or die!" As soon as he utters this threat, two whirlwinds form in the room, picking up dust and debris. The puddle of water animates into a wall-like creature that advances toward you menacingly.

Treasure: The Storm Prince has managed to find a silver amulet with a mounted opal worth 100 gp. Its appearance resembles the illusory image of the Amulet of Storms, but is not magical.

Tactics: The water elemental moves in to engage the party and use *whelm* to push enemies toward the door as soon as it can hit three or more characters. The air elemental attempts to either flank a character who engages the water elemental or, failing that, to strike at any character trying to avoid the whirlwinds. The Storm Prince uses the *peals of thunder* power granted by his hiding place against the nearest opponent to keep that individual away from the cupola and push him or her into the elementals if possible. If the prince is spared by the adventurers, his last-ditch option is to offer to trade his life for the amulet, alleging that it is the true Amulet of Storms.


Temple of Avandra
Upper Level
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
One square = 5 feet

The Storm Prince, Goblin Sniper

The Storm Prince is a smart but lazy goblin runt that got in way over his head.

Key Traits: Opportunistic, tyrannical, nervous and fearful.

Goal: Initial: Avoid work. Current: Leave the plane and not get killed by Drogto.

Motivation: Loves ordering people around. Power-drunk with the goblins' response to his orders.

Fears: Drogto's wrath and the adventurers.

Weaknesses: Easily unnerved, makes him prone to childish tantrums.

Mannerisms and Physical Characteristics: Deep, commanding voice when under the cupola; high-pitched, annoying voice otherwise. Screams all the time. Thin and sickly.

The best way to roleplay the Storm Prince is as a spoiled, tyrannical child. Throughout the adventure, feel free to pepper scenes with a mix of orders and juvenile screams.

Elemental Whirlwind (Fantastic Terrain)

These two vortexes of energy, animated by nonsentient elemental forces, occupy 1 square each and sweep the room, picking up scraps and debris. Their movement is erratic; at the end of each round, move each of them 1 square in a randomly determined direction (roll a d8).

Effect: Characters starting their turn in or adjacent to a whirlwind take 5 damage. Characters who enter a whirlwind's square are immobilized until the whirlwind moves out of their space.

Both the air elemental and the water elemental in this encounter take 1d8 + 3 damage if forced into a whirlwind's space. A character who makes a DC 12 Arcana check discovers this weakness.

The Stone Cupola

The stone cupola acts as a nexus of elemental air energy in the temple. Anybody standing underneath it can hear everything being said in the temple and can be heard throughout the structure in a booming, echoing voice.

The cupola grants superior cover to anyone hiding underneath it, which means that any attacks directed against that individual take a –5 penalty to the attack roll. Furthermore, anyone standing in any square under the cupola gains the following terrain power.

Peals of Thunder — At-Will Terrain

With a well-timed shout, your voice is amplified in the surrounding area before being focused back into a single blast of reverberating sound.

Standard Action

Requirement: You must be standing underneath the stone cupola and be able to speak.
Target: A creature within 10 squares
Attack: Dexterity vs. Reflex (Storm Prince: +6 vs. Reflex)
Hit: 5 thunder damage, and the target falls prone.
Effect: The target is pushed up to 3 squares.

Features of the Area

Statues: The three statues of Avandra on the lower tier are heavily damaged. They are difficult terrain and provide partial cover.

Collapsed Wall: The back wall of the upper tier has collapsed. Any nonflying creature moving past it falls 10 feet into the collapsed ruins below, taking 1d10 damage.

Debris: The remains of the collapsed wall and ceiling are difficult terrain.

Stairs: These are difficult terrain for a creature ascending them, normal terrain otherwise.

Zelda the Cat: If Zelda (from area 6) is brought into this room, it spends the encounter under the cupola, pestering the Storm Prince. This distraction imposes a –2 penalty to attack rolls made by the poor goblin, which has no intention of harming the animal.

The Storm Prince — **Level 1 Minion Artillery**
Small natural humanoid, goblin — XP –

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +3
AC 13, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12 — **Perception** +1
Speed 6 — Low-light vision

Traits

Sniper
If the prince misses with a ranged attack while hidden, he remains hidden.

Standard Actions

Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 4 damage.

Shortbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 4 damage.

Triggered Actions

Goblin Tactics ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: The goblin is missed by a melee attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.

Skills Stealth +8, Thievery +8

Str 13 (+1)	**Dex** 17 (+3)	**Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 13 (+1)	**Int** 8 (-1)	**Cha** 8 (-1)

Alignment evil — **Languages** Common, Goblin
Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows

Lesser Water Elemental **Level 1 Controller**
Small elemental natural beast (aquatic, water) XP –

HP 29; **Bloodied** 14 **Initiative** +2
AC 15, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12 **Perception** +0
Speed 6, swim 6

Traits

Aquatic
The elemental can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Sensitive to Cold
Whenever the elemental takes cold damage, it gains vulnerable 5 against the next attack that hits it before the end of its next turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Slam ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d6 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Whelm ✦ Encounter
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +4 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 2 damage, and the elemental pushes the target up to 2 squares and knocks it prone.

Minor Actions

Drowning Essence ✦ At-Will (1/round)
Effect: The elemental slides each creature taking ongoing damage from its *slam* 1 square.

Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 11 (+0)
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 5 (-3) **Cha** 8 (-1)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** understands Primordial

Lesser Air Elemental **Level 1 Lurker**
Small elemental magical beast (air) XP –

HP 23; **Bloodied** 11 **Initiative** +7
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13 **Perception** +0
Speed 0, fly 6 (hover)
Vulnerable 5 fire

Traits

Phantom on the Wind
The lesser air elemental becomes invisible whenever it starts its turn without an enemy adjacent to it. The invisibility lasts until the end of its next turn or until it hits or misses with an attack.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Slam ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage.

Grasp of Storms ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature that can't see the elemental); +4 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the elemental grabs the target (escape DC 12) if it does not have a creature grabbed. Until the grab ends, the target takes ongoing 5 damage, and any ranged or melee attacks that hit the elemental deal half damage to the target.

Skills Stealth +8
Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+0)
Con 11 (+0) **Int** 5 (-3) **Cha** 8 (-1)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** understands Primordial

13. Priest Quarters

The contents of this partially collapsed room have been smashed beyond recognition. Nothing of interest lies in it.

14. Priest Quarters

This room is another bedchamber with smashed furniture. A relatively intact granite statue of Avandra shows her wearing an amulet adorned with a stone. The sculpted representation of the amulet shows several signs of having been hacked at with crude tools, but damage to it is limited. This allows characters to discern that it represents a large gemstone mounted in a metal disc and attached to a slender chain.

A DC 12 Religion check while studying this depiction reveals it to be a representation of Avandra's Amulet of Storms. A result of 19 or higher on that check also reveals that aspects of Avandra have been known to grant the benefit of this amulet to those who champion great changes.

15. Priest Quarters

This room is another bedchamber with smashed furniture. A deeply scratched engraving on the wall shows snatches of short prayers to Avandra, written in Common. A DC 8 Religion allows a character to reconstruct and decipher them. They are professions of love to the goddess, asking her blessings for peaceful travels and clement weather. Chanting these litanies during the confrontation with the aspect in area 10 provides a +2 bonus to any skill checks made to deal with her.

16. Priest Quarters

This room is another bedchamber with destroyed furniture. It is empty except for a grand mosaic, now damaged, on its walls. The image recounts great moments of changes inspired by Avandra's faith. A DC 12 Religion check or History check reveals that each such event was brought about by adventurers or heroes. Some of the champions depicted in the mosaic are wearing a platinum amulet set with a large gemstone.

17. Access to the Temple Hall

The wails of the goddess are very loud in this area. A roughly 5-foot-wide hole in the wall opens high above the temple hall (area 10). A knotted rope is fixed to a nearby column and is coiled by the hole.

Returning Home

At this point of the adventure, the characters have likely successfully dealt with the Storm Prince and the weeping aspect of Avandra. The next step is to return through the portal. But the remaining occupants of the temple might have other ideas.

Event 4: Not So Fast, Kids

Roleplaying Encounter, Skill Challenge, or Combat Encounter Level 0 (1 Experience Token)

This encounter occurs if the goddess is freed and if the goblins still have a leader, either Drogto or the Storm Prince. Otherwise the party can leave the plane in peace simply by returning to the portal (area 1).

Read (or adapt) the following when ready:
As the last vestige of the Weeping Goddess fades away, you bask in the new, soothing silence of the temple. This peace is rapidly broken by the cries of goblins approaching the temple hall.

This encounter represents the final push by the goblins to try to escape this plane. Depending how many of them are left and if Drogto is still around, the goblins might hatch a hasty plan to intercept the characters as soon as they can to force them to "share" their means of return.

Refer to areas 2, 5, and 12 to determine the number of remaining goblins, their combat statistics, and information on Drogto and the Storm Prince.

At this point the goblins don't have much to leverage their position with, except the threat of violence and any valuables they still possess.

To make this encounter as dynamic as possible, set it up according to what you feel your players will appreciate the most. For example:

- An ambush encounter somewhere in the temple, where the goblins attempt to subdue the characters and coerce them into helping the goblins get through the portal.
- A chase reminiscent of Event 1 in which the characters try to reach the portal before being intercepted by the remaining goblins.
- A roleplaying encounter in which Drogto (or the Storm Prince) tries to turn the tables on the characters.

In all cases, use DCs of 12 and 19 for moderate and hard tasks respectively whenever ability checks or skill checks are called for.

If the characters want to try to bring back any remaining goblins, someone who makes a DC 12 Arcana check can discern that each goblin need only touch a character wearing one of Denek's silver rings in order to accompany that character through the portal.

Concluding the Adventure

When the characters pass through the portal, Denek is waiting for them. His reaction depends on whether or not the quest was successful. If the goddess was freed, he is overjoyed, shouting, "She's back, she's back, I can feel her now!" If they failed, he displays an expression of deep sadness before regaining his composure, then gently thanks them for trying.

If the characters have goblins in tow, Denek's reaction differs according to whether the aspect was freed. If she was, he'll let the characters deal with the goblins: "You did what you had to do, now please escort these vile creatures out of our home." If she wasn't freed, he grows exceedingly angry at the goblins, blaming them for the characters' failure: "You caused this, didn't you? Defilers! My children, smite them, I command you!"

However, at this point, Denek is too weak and spent to do anything else. It's up to the characters to decide what to do.

If the quest was successfully completed, Denek provides letters of recommendation to the best mentors, trainers, schools and academies of the realm for the characters to undergo class training. He'll invite them to stay at the orphanage a few more nights then hurry them along to their new life as adventurers.

If a character wishes to retire from his or her nascent adventuring career, Denek offers them the orphanage: "Run it, sell it or make it into an inn, I no longer need it."

If you wish to start a campaign with these characters, a few open threads can be woven into future plot arcs:

- If any of the goblins were rescued, do they repay the party? Or do they seek revenge?
- Has the freed aspect of the Weeping Goddess fused back into her original essence, restoring

the portfolio of sea voyages to Avandra instead of Melora?

- ✦ What if the aspect was estranged for too long and came back as a new goddess with a rejuvenated Denek as high priest? Maybe he'll ask the adventurers to seek out old relics and ancient temples.

The Birth of New Heroes

One thing you should consider as players bring their characters to level 1 is giving those characters XP for sharing what happened to their characters while they were training. Where did they train? Who did they meet? Were they mentors or rivals? More important, what brought them back together to start a new adventure?

You should award 100 XP to the whole party for each player who shares such a story. It doesn't have to be complex or voluminous; a few words to help you devise future plot hooks and story lines are all you need.

And thus are new legends born!

Alternative Reward

Avandra's Boon of Storms Level 1 Uncommon

Like an ocean storm, change is both inevitable and rarely controllable. To those who embrace change rather than fight it, Avandra occasionally grants the power to influence events.

Alternative Reward: Divine Boon 360 gp

Property

You gain a +1 item bonus to Diplomacy checks.

Utility Power ✦ Daily (No Action)

Trigger: You make a skill check and don't like the result.

Effect: You reroll the skill check and use the second result, even if it's lower.

Afterword: Creating a Level 0 Adventure

If you like the idea of running a level 0 adventure and your players believe they are up to the challenge, creating your own scenario can be a fulfilling exercise and lead to a fun experience for the group.

When you start planning a level 0 adventure, you have to first take into account the very low power of the characters. Thus, you not only need to adjust the danger level of your encounters, you must also take into account what adventure themes are most appropriate for such characters. A level 0 adventure represents the springboard of the adventuring careers of a group of promising people who have yet to experience firsthand the wonders, excitement, and perils of the world.

In keeping with what brings many players to the game in the first place, a level 0 adventure should focus on the exploration, discovery, and mystery aspects of the Dungeons & Dragons game. Witnessing exotic, forgotten places, stumbling upon strange manifestations, and discovering secrets the characters weren't meant to know are all perfect themes for such an adventure. That's not to say that more classical situations, such as defending a village against raiding humanoids or clearing a mine of critters aren't appropriate. Just remember that with their underdeveloped combat abilities and limited sources of healing, the characters will likely struggle more in a combat-heavy environment and require ways to recover during play.

Of course you want your encounters, combat and otherwise, to be filled with action, danger, and excitement. The trick is to gauge it to hit the right intensity. As designed, level 0 characters are significantly weaker than their level 1 counterparts. What hinders them the most is the lack of weapon proficiencies and not having a wide selection of trained skills. Try using easy to moderate DCs in encounters that make use of skill checks to resolve issues related to exploration, puzzles, or roleplaying. When it becomes necessary to present a harder challenge, consider creating a situation in which all the characters can help to complete a hard task, or break the daunting task into two or more smaller, easier tasks. Another way to pave the way for success in an endeavor that has a hard DC is to plant pieces of information and tools for the characters to uncover through exploration. Those revelations can then provide bonuses to the more difficult skill checks when they are brought into play at the appropriate time.

When you design combat encounters, you need to look over the limited resources at the characters' disposal. In addition to not being particularly competent with weapons, they wear no armor, and have fewer hit points and healing surges than full-fledged adventurers. Although they can likely take on a level 1 encounter, doing so will likely tax their resources significantly. For that reason, a level 1 encounter (if you use one) should represent the climax of your level 0 adventure.

There are several ways to take the limitations of level 0 characters into account. First, you should tailor an encounter to the number of characters in the group instead of worrying about XP budgets. Consider using about as many opponents as there are characters, possibly one or two more, to create interesting tactical situations. Also, you can populate the encounter with minions rather than standard level 1 monsters as to make the threat significant yet manageable. You might include one or two level 1 creatures once in a while to make things more challenging, especially in the final confrontation. You should, however, refrain from using higher-level monsters unless you compensate by reducing their defenses and hit points, either through straight modification or by means of an in-story mechanic.

For example, if the final villain of the adventure is a level 3 human guard wearing heavy armor, maybe the adventurers have picked up a labeled vial of rust monster antenna puree they can throw at him to knock his AC down a few points.

Also, you'll want to make good use of difficult terrain, cover, fantastic terrain, and traps that characters can interact with to enrich the encounter and provide additional resources. Terrain powers, presented in *Dungeon Master's Guide 2*, are tailor-made for level 0 encounters.

Finally, you should design each combat encounter in such a way that an outcome other than the death of the characters is preferable to the antagonists. If such obviously inexperienced characters can't beat the monsters, why should they bother killing them? This sort of dramatic twist can lead to some very interesting, unplanned scenes.

Beyond choosing an appropriate theme for level 0 characters and designing encounters aimed at challenging them just enough, you might want to plant some seeds for the upcoming campaign. Beyond what the players will give you when they relate their leveling-up stories, any of the elements that you introduced in your level 0 adventure can be linked to those you plan to being in further down the line. Maybe the hidden temple the PCs explored is one of many that together form some sort of network of evil energy. What if the characters were made privy to a secret deal between the goblin pirate prince and the duke's seneschal? Each NPC, each piece of the setting, each "untold story" introduced in the adventure can become a spark for many future tales.

About the Author

Phil Menard writes: "This adventure is a both a sequel and a tribute to the original Advanced Dungeons & Dragons level 0 adventure module *Treasure Hunt* by Aaron Allston. Although I never played it, I read it many times back then. It never failed to fire up tween-aged dreams of kids becoming heroes."

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"I can tell by looking at you sorry bastards that some of you came all this way for nothing. You've got stars in your eyes, your heads in the clouds, and nothing but empty dreams to show me. You think because you pick up a sword you can take on an orc? Judging by the way you hold those practice swords, you're not fit to fight kobolds. Why, one hit from a spear and you'd be on your back crying for your mamma!

"Look. I'm going to tell you plain. This is war. This is life or death. Goblins don't give second chances. They want you dead, they want you begging for mercy as they tickle you with their axes. You pay attention, or you're dead. It's as simple as that. Oh, I'm not the one that's gonna send you packing to that feathery bint, no sir. I don't have to when there are bandits, trolls, and worse out there all itching for a chance to pull you apart.

"Before we get back to work, I've got something else to tell you. You might be here to learn a bit of swordplay and maybe take up life as an 'adventurer' or some such twaddle. We're not here to help you rob the dead and go get yourself killed. We're here to make warriors out of you. You follow the lessons, practice a bit, and keep your nose clean, you might—you just might—make it to be a militiaman over in Foote. Now, back at it. Jones, get that damn shield up. Luca, you're swinging that axe like it's gonna bite ya. Put your back into it. . . ."

—Captain Durgen Anvilson,
War College

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History of the War College

No matter where you look in the world, the bones of some dead civilization or another litter the landscape. Each of these ruins stands as a testament to the people and the culture that first raised it. When one mighty empire fell, another rose, building atop the wreckage of what came before. Such is the march of history, and so was it for Nerath, the last empire of mankind. Nerath expanded across the lands, claiming fields and mountains as wise kings brought justice and order to a world still ravaged by Bael Turath's iniquities. Abandoned fortresses, crumbling castles, and even ruined cities became the foundations for a new and idealistic nation committed to bringing civilization's light to the impenetrable darkness.

Nerathan knights, during the empire's westward expansion, discovered Caer Storogal's ruins atop a hillock rising over the heart of a secluded valley. The knights deduced from the architecture and the intact structures that dwarves must have raised the citadel and its great age meant it could have been built as far back as the legendary Age of Chains. The wilderness had reclaimed the once cultivated lands, and where farmland spread across the landscape there now stood fields thick with bracken and dense forest blanketing the valley and up the mountains' slopes. After dealing with a sortie of goblin squatters, the human force claimed the ruin and the surrounding lands in the name of their king.

The settlers preserved the original architecture where possible. The outer wall and the wall separating the baileys from the inner area remain as the knights found them. Time, elements, and various squatters did too much damage to the interior structures and thus those buildings were replaced with stout timber construction using wood cleared from the surrounding forests. The labor and materials requires, along with the promise of gold, lured many more settlers to Caer Storogal, and it was not long before a smaller settlement, called Foote, grew up near the valley's entrance.

Aside from the occasional humanoid raid or a giant descending from the peaks, the valley proved so peaceful that it became an attractive option for nobles seeking to lodge their sons and daughters for training, so the offspring would learn the arts of war and serve their nation. There were dangers, to be sure, but not enough for the nobility to feel as though they risked their children's lives. The officers proved to be capable instructors, and a generation later Caer Storogal was already known throughout the empire as the preeminent school of war.

Dark times fell upon the human nation and dreadful war spread across the lands as gnolls and demons marched beneath the banner of the White Ruin. The empire expanded its armies, claiming levies from the smallest towns to far-flung outposts. Caer Storogal supplied officers, but the war's demands outstripped those leaders' abilities, and greener and greener soldiers left the school's vaunted halls to die on distant battlefields, mangled and unrecognizable. Though many soldiers volunteered for the fighting, the citadel's duty was to protect the empire's western frontier, and the commander of the citadel would not shirk that responsibility even though her country groaned under the constant violence. And then it was done. The king and his sons lay dead, nobles slaughtered, the ashes of an empire dispersed on bitter winds.

The commander decided that although the citadel was without a nation, it was the duty of those who survived to preserve the ideals on which their society was founded. Rather than abandon the fortress, the commander secured the valley and opened the war college to any able-bodied person who wanted to learn. Refugees from the shattered lands spilled into the valley, overpopulating Foote and staking claim to the plots of land scattered across the valley floor. The refugees brought with them talents and skills much needed, and the valley thrived as a result. It seemed to all that a new nation would be born, an heir to the old empire.

It was a dream, one dashed by a series of calamities that struck the valley. First, orcs spilled down from the mountains and sacked Foote before the soldiers in Caer Storogal could muster. In the savage horde's wake followed a plague. Settlements and farmsteads founded after Nerath's fall disappeared in flames that were started to keep the sickness from spreading. The hopes that many had held for the ancient fortress soon faded, and now all that remains in the surrounding area are sagging farms, rot, and overgrown fields. Even Foote has changed—criminals and scum overrun the shrinking community.

Despite all that has troubled the citadel and its environs, Caer Storogal stands proud, unbent, and unbroken. The castle has become a beacon, inviting all who seek protection inside its walls to learn to fight tyranny and evil.

Organization

Discipline kept Caer Storogal from succumbing to the decay that spread out from Nerath's corpse. Loyalty, honor, and duty have kept alive the war college and its protectors. Courage, and the will to stand against countless enemies mustering against them in this uncertain time, have given them the grit they need to hold on despite the encroaching evil.

Commander

All authority in the war college rests in the hands of the commander. Charged with governing the stronghold and the farmland around it, meting out justice, and managing the soldiers under his command, the commander shoulders a difficult burden. To attain this position, a candidate must earn the trust and

support from his fellow captains, whose votes elect him to lifelong service. This is no simple process as candidates jockey and vie for votes, making promises to their fellows and undertaking favors to form a coalition.

Captains

Any number of captains might serve the commander at one time. Throughout the war college's history, commanders have tried to maintain an odd number of captains, usually somewhere between five and eleven. Currently, six men and women hold the rank of captain, hinting at the tensions gripping the stronghold and explaining the fears over succession.

A captain splits his or her time between training students and enforcing the Nerathan law preserved and upheld since the empire fell. Thus, captains dispense justice, settle disputes, and lead patrols through the countryside to chase down criminals.

As for training, each captain favors a particular fighting style, a factor that influences the commander's decision when raising up a new officer to join their ranks.

Sergeants and Warriors

Every captain oversees command of a dozen or so warriors who have completed training at the war college and who have opted to stay behind. Sergeants wrangle the warriors and keep order when the captain trains recruits. The warriors under a captain reflect the captain's specialty—many were once their pupils—and so archery captains lead artillery, for example. The captains replenish diminished companies with students and graduates. Tuition is free for those who agree to serve two years for every year spent in training. Even those who pay sometimes stay behind, because they have come to see Caer Storogal as home. Plus, the promise of shelter and three square meals is often too good to for a lowborn warrior pass up.

Chancellor

The captains see to military and training concerns, but the chancellor keeps the war college, and indeed the whole of Caer Storogal, in working order. The chancellor attends to all the infrastructural needs, from maintaining the armory, keeping the stronghold supplied with equipment, negotiating with farmers for food, and accounting for all the supplies. The commander can select a chancellor from among the soldiers under his command, or can bring in someone from beyond the stronghold if an exceptional individual comes to the fore. Although the chancellor has no actual political power, the holder of the position reports to the commander, and many chancellors have used their access to influence the war college's master.

The chancellor oversees a staff of twenty or so **servants**. These people work the kitchens, tend the stables, craft arms and armor at the forge, and do any other duty the stronghold requires. Students are expected to spend time each day working with the support staff, both to build character and to occupy their time between training sessions.

Recruits

The recruits round out the rest of the people living at the war college. People from any land and of any race find welcome here. Most new recruits, called "worms," are young, having been uprooted from their families and homes by some tragic circumstance or other. Older students haze the younger ones, making life difficult throughout the first year, after which time a worm graduates to become a student.

Captains expect their students to master some number of weapons, and after six months a student must demonstrate his or her skill to the captain. If the captain is satisfied, the student receives a stripe, a blue tattoo inked on the forearm. Students who have at least one stripe take turns accompanying warriors on their patrols, and those who have two stripes can participate in military operations. No student is bound to the war college; any can leave at any time. However, to graduate, a student must receive at least three stripes.

Notables and Curriculum

Caer Storogal's people are warriors first and instructors second. Preserving civilization on the frontier requires diligent patrols and enforcing Nerath's laws in the lands around their hold. Although their duty is clear, the captains and their support personnel prove willing and capable instructors, and many a famous adventurer has learned the fighting arts from these talented individuals.

The war college instills Nerath's values in its faculty and students, but it does not enforce a particular moral code. So long as an individual upholds and follows the laws, no one cares what a person believes or how a person behaves. Thus the war college has attracted all manner of unsavory sorts in recent years. Many of the more good-hearted people believe the commander would have chased out the scum by now had he been in his proper mind, a belief that serves only to intensify feelings of unrest and worry about the future.

Commander Gufton Ordeane

In his youth, Gufton Ordeane was a brilliant military strategist and a gifted warrior, qualities ensuring his ascent to commander when he was just thirty. During the five decades he has governed, he's seen hundreds of students come and go, personally training the best and the brightest to become adventurers famed across the lands. Time, though, has taken its toll, and in his twilight years, his mind and body have begun to fail, leading the captains to start jockeying to take his place.

Gufton closets himself in his bedchambers, where he clings to past glories and the few memories that haven't been wiped out by his growing dementia. When he feels strong enough, he climbs the steps to the upper floor to peer out across the stronghold and survey his legacy. His failing health makes these appearances rare of late.

The commander is too far gone to be a threat or an ally to the player characters.

USING THE STAT BLOCKS

Several NPCs described here include stat blocks for use as allies or enemies for your adventuring group. As allies, these characters might become companion characters (using the rules presented in *Dungeon Master's Guide 2*), who accompany the heroes during one or more adventures on the war college's behalf. As adversaries, the player characters might stumble onto a wicked plot, a secret, or some other detail whose revelation could have repercussions. The NPC might seek vengeance, either at the war college or later, when the adventurers are higher in level, especially if their part in revealing the secret isn't immediately obvious.

Captain Tytos Long

Tytos is the bastard son of a disgraced landowner. As a young man, he traveled to Caer Storogal to seek his fortunes. Along the way, bandits captured him, subjecting him to cruel treatment for days before he escaped. Tytos reached the stronghold, and his hatred carried him through his training. He became one of the fiercest and dangerous warriors the war college ever produced. When he gained his fifth stripe, he left the stronghold to find the bandits that had wronged him. He returned a month later with a dozen scalps tied to his belt.

Tytos teaches the hammer, the axe, the mace, and the pick. He is a vicious instructor, but his students are the better for it. Those under his tutelage who would become adventurers often turn out as fighters, rogues, and warlords.

Plots and Intrigues: Tytos sees the commander's recent decline in health as an opportunity. He opposed many of Gufton's policies, arguing for stricter rules and nastier consequences for those who break them. Tytos wants to be the next commander. He has not made enough allies among the other captains and he knows he would not win a vote. He has resolved himself to taking the title if a more suitable candidate fails to present himself or herself when the lord commander dies. He has such a plan in place to secure the war college by force and make sure he gets the title even if he has to use force.

Tytos Long	**Level 11 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 600
HP 136; **Bloodied** 68	**Initiative** +7
AC 23, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 23	**Perception** +6
Speed 5	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Execution Axe** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 5 damage, and the target falls prone.	
⸸ **Murderous Finish** (fear, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one prone enemy); +16 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d12 + 10 damage, and Tytos gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of his next turn.	
Triggered Actions	
⸸ **Vicious Temper** ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: Tytos knocks an enemy prone.	
Effect (Free Action): Tytos takes 5 damage and uses *murderous finish*.	
Skills Endurance +13, Intimidate +14	
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+6)	
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+9)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	
Equipment chainmail, execution axe	

Captain Verus Polston

Few halflings make their home in the valley, and only a handful live at the war college. Of them, Verus is the best known. Born to refugees fleeing Nerath's fall who later succumbed to the plague, Verus found a place in the college as an orphan. For a time, he worked for the chancellor but eventually won a place as a recruit after beating a boy in a duel. His training only toughened him, proving he was every bit as capable as his peers and doubly as dangerous.

Verus specializes in light blades, particularly their use in hand-to-hand combat, and also in marksmanship. He's not one for verbosity, and he keeps his lessons to the point. He's stern but fair, and those who get their stripes from him often carry fierce loyalty for their captain. Most of the prospective adventurers who train under the halfling take up the path of the fighter, the rogue, the ranger, or the warlord.

Plots and Intrigues: Verus cares little for politics and has no ambition to become the next commander. He would accept Tytos Long as the new commander, since Verus believes the vicious captain would bring needed discipline and strength to Caer Storogal. Tytos's penchant for going too far in his punishments, however, raises doubt in Verus's mind. In the end, Verus will support whoever looks to be the front-runner, if only to make sure the transition occurs quickly and with little trouble.

Verus Polston **Level 10 Skirmisher**
Small natural humanoid, halfling XP 500

HP 102; **Bloodied** 51 **Initiative** +13
AC 24, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 22 **Perception** +8
Speed 6
Saving Throws +5 against fear effects

Traits

Combat Advantage
Verus's melee and ranged attacks deal 2d6 extra damage to targets he has combat advantage against.

Nimble Reaction
Verus gains a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.

Standard Actions

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 9 damage, and Verus can shift 1 square.

Shuriken (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 12 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and Verus can shift 1 square.

Flying Blades (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of Verus's next turn.
Miss: Half damage.

Move Actions

Tumbling Escape ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Effect: Verus shifts up to his speed.

Triggered Actions

Second Chance ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: An enemy hits Verus with an attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The triggering enemy rerolls the attack roll and must use the second result.

Skills Acrobatics +18, Athletics +10, Thievery +18

Str 11 (+5)	**Dex** 22 (+11)	**Wis** 17 (+8)
Con 14 (+7)	**Int** 12 (+6)	**Cha** 15 (+7)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, 4 daggers, 5 shuriken

THE SUCCESSION SITUATION

An ailing lord commander with six fractious captains creates opportunities aplenty for roleplaying and intrigue. The "Plots and Intrigues" sections describe each captain's opinion regarding the succession and which captain he or she will support. Of the six, two captains stand the best chance at being raised up to commander: Tytos Long and Janus Storn.

Tytos wants the title, but he would institute unpopular changes at the war college, perhaps turning the citadel toward darkness and evil as his draconian methods to crush disobedience and instill discipline crush the virtue from the hearts of those under his command.

Janus Storn is the heir apparent to the current lord commander, but he does not want the post. He would rather spend his time in the field, protecting the people from the threats against them. If the lord commander dies, Storn would return to the war college to cast his vote, though many doubt it would be for himself.

Player characters who become involved in the intrigue might try to shift votes from one candidate to another, working behind the scenes to promote the worthier captain to take command.

For a much deeper level of involvement, one or more player characters might put themselves forward as candidates, having been raised up from the ranks by the ailing Commander Gufton to break the deadlock among the other six captains. Whatever you decide, the war college's future is for you and your players to determine.

Captain Myra Corben

Like many captains, Myra Corben came to the stronghold as a student and found she didn't want to leave once she had her stripes. Myra won acclaim for her keen eye and deadly aim, and it was clear to all that she was destined for greatness. After graduation, she served with the scouts and won the rank of sergeant when she delivered the killing blow against a raging hill giant. Years later, she received her appointment as a captain.

Myra is a hard person to befriend. Students fear her as much they respect her. She's good at her job, and even the most inept pupils improve under her training. Adventurers who study with Myra often become rangers, rogues, and warlords.

Plots and Intrigues: Commander Gufton has always been a father figure for Myra, and his growing weakness troubles her. She loathes Tytos and argues against him whenever he goes on a rant about Gufton's policies. She doesn't want to take on the responsibility of being commander, but she will fight for the post if by doing so she can stop Tytos from gaining it.

Myra Corben **Level 13 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, half-orc XP 800

HP 100; **Bloodied** 50 **Initiative** +12
AC 27, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 23 **Perception** +13
Speed 6 (8 while charging) Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Bastard Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 5 damage.

Longbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20/40 (one or two creatures); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 5 damage.

Punishing Shot (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Ranged 20/40 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 10 damage. The first time the target willingly moves before the start of Myra's next turn, it takes 1d10 damage.

Triggered Actions

Half-Orc Resilience ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: Myra is first bloodied.
Effect (No Action): Myra gains 10 temporary hit points.

Furious Assault ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: Myra hits an enemy with an attack.
Effect (Free Action): The triggering attack deals 1d10 extra damage.

Skills Endurance +16, Intimidate +12

Str 20 (+11)	**Dex** 22 (+12)	**Wis** 14 (+8)
Con 16 (+9)	**Int** 13 (+7)	**Cha** 9 (+5)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment hide armor, bastard sword, longbow, quiver with 20 arrows

Captain Janus Storn

The most beloved captain at the war college is the one least often present. Captain Janus Storn is a hero to students and soldiers alike, a fearless warrior possessed of a quick mind and flawless technique. Most attribute the recent stability in the countryside to his peerless command. Janus stays in the field, believing that he best serves the war college by protecting it from the enemies haunting the wilds.

Janus is the war college's best mind when it comes to warfare. He teaches strategy and military history, and he gives lessons on traditional weapons such as heavy blades and polearms. Fighters and warlords typify the sorts of adventurers who study under this captain.

Plots and Intrigues: Janus spends little time in the castle, and when he does visit, he reviews the performance of his students and gives lectures in the Great Hall. He leaves drilling to his sergeant, Fess. In the eyes of many, Janus's prowess makes him the best candidate to replace Commander Gufton. Tytos realizes the extent of Janus's reputation and considers Janus to be his main competition for the post. In recent weeks, Janus's absence from Storogal has kept him from witnessing Tytos's maneuvering or properly assessing the state of Commander Gufton's health. If Janus is in the field when Gufton dies, Tytos might move to consolidate his position before his bitter rival can return. If, however, Janus can be convinced to return, it could be possible for him to block Tytos's bid to become the new commander.

Janus Storn	**Level 14 Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 1,000
HP 138; **Bloodied** 69	**Initiative** +11
AC 30, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25	**Perception** +8
Speed 5	

Traits

☼ **Seasoned Commander ✦ Aura** 5
Allies in the aura gain a +1 power bonus to attack rolls and a +2 power bonus to damage rolls.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Fullblade** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d12 + 9 damage.

⸸ **Coordinated Offensive** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 1d12 + 6 damage.
Effect: One ally within 5 squares of Janus makes a melee basic attack as a free action.

⸸ **Hero's Exploit** (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d12 + 9 damage.
Effect: Each ally within 5 squares of Janus gains 10 temporary hit points.

Triggered Actions

⸸ **Blocking Strike ✦ At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to Janus uses an attack power that does not include Janus as a target.
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 1d12 + 6 damage, and the target must roll twice for its next attack roll and use the lower result.

Skills Diplomacy +15, History +16

Str 23 (+13)	**Dex** 14 (+9)	**Wis** 12 (+8)
Con 18 (+11)	**Int** 19 (+11)	**Cha** 17 (+10)

Alignment lawful good **Languages** Common
Equipment scale armor, fullblade

Captain Ormen Tal

Ormen Tal has served at Caer Storogal since before Nerath fell. Pushing one hundred twenty years of age, he shows no sign of slowing down. He's every bit the warrior he was in his youth. When he's not riding patrols, he teaches horsemanship, spear fighting, falconry, and hunting. He has taught more than a few adventurers in his time, and many of his former students are rangers and warlords.

If Ormen's advanced age seems suspicious, it's with good reason. The person who bears his name is not who he seems to be. The real Ormen Tal was murdered and replaced a few years ago by a doppelganger named Xin. It took a while for the changeling to equal the half-elf in talent, but eventually it did, and the creature has lived in secret these long years.

Plots and Intrigues: Xin is a cancer in Caer Storogal and now works to undermine its work and bring the war college to ruin. He needs no motivation other than the fact that its mere existence offends his sensibilities. Tal is Tytos Long's closest confidant, and in the darkest hours, he encourages the captain to hold fast against the captains who support Commander Gufton. Once Gufton dies, Xin hopes the captains will tear each other apart in the fight to take his place.

If anyone interferes with Xin's plotting, the doppelganger would be quick to dispose of the troublemaker with a poisoned blade.

Ormen Tal, Doppelganger	**Level 9 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 400
HP 72; **Bloodied** 36	**Initiative** +13
AC 23, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21	**Perception** +10
Speed 5	

Traits

Combat Advantage
Ormen's melee attacks deal 2d6 extra damage to targets he has combat advantage against.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Spear** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage.

⸸ **Poisoned Short Sword** (poison, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The ongoing poison damage increases to 10.

Minor Actions

⸸ **Shapeshifter Feint ✦ At-Will** (1/round)
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target grants combat advantage to Ormen until the end of Ormen's next turn.

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Ormen alters his physical form to appear as a Medium humanoid until he uses *change shape* again or until he drops to 0 hit points. To assume a specific individual's form, Ormen must have seen that individual. Other creatures can make a DC 30 Insight check to discern that the form is a disguise.

Skills Bluff +12, Insight +10, Stealth +14, Thievery +14

Str 10 (+4)	**Dex** 21 (+9)	**Wis** 12 (+5)
Con 12 (+5)	**Int** 16 (+7)	**Cha** 17 (+7)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment chainmail, short sword, spear

Captain Durgen Anvilson

Famed for his sarcasm and fiery temper, Durgen Anvilson terrifies the worms. Those who get to know him learn that he's not bad, just a bit eccentric. Durgen has seen too many students die in battle, so he uses fear and bluster to impress his charges with war's bitter realities. Durgen teaches the proper ways to wear armor, how to maximize its coverage, and how to manage its bulk. His adventuring students often become fighters and warlords.

Durgen Anvilson	**Level 10 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf	XP 500
HP 105; **Bloodied** 52	**Initiative** +8
AC 26, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 22	**Perception** +9
Speed 5	Low-light vision
Saving Throws +5 against poison effects	
Traits	
Executioner	
Durgen's melee attacks deal 1d8 extra damage to prone targets.	
Stand the Ground	
Durgen can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.	
Steady-Footed	
Durgen can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock him prone.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Battleaxe** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 7 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of Durgen's next turn.	
⸸ **Shield Bash** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d6 + 3 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Triggered Actions	
⸸ **Stay Down** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An adjacent enemy stands up.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); +15 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 8 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Skills Dungeoneering +16, Endurance +15, Heal+14	
Str 20 (+10) **Dex** 12 (+6) **Wis** 19 (+9)	
Con 17 (+8) **Int** 8 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+5)	
Alignment lawful good **Languages** Common, Dwarven	
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, battleaxe	

Plots and Intrigues: Durgen suspects something is amiss with Ormen Tal and has for years. The two were friends, but after a mission not long ago, the half-elf came back seemingly changed, as if he didn't know his old friend. Never one to forget a slight, Durgen has mulled over the odd behavior, stewing on it until he has become genuinely suspicious. Sometimes Durgen even sets worms to keep an eye on the half-elf.

Chancellor Richard Lesterson

Richard Lesterson never wanted to become chancellor, but circumstances gave him little choice. Master Lesterson has long lived a double life.

To most people, he has appeared to be a successful merchant, on occasion troubled with tragedy, who owed his fortunes to successful dealings with Caer Storogal for over a decade. What no one in the valley knows is that Lesterson owes nearly all his success to the fortunes a succubus used to lay claim to his soul. Lesterson has done everything he can think of to wiggle out from the bargain, studying all manner of weird and forbidden tomes, but has yet to find a way to convince the succubus to release it.

His troubling situation turned worse when bandits attacked his estate a few miles from Foote. Lesterson watched as the killers began to assault and slay his family and his staff from a window looking out from his secret chambers, where he kept evidence of his double life from his family's eyes. Desperate to save his family, he performed an incantation to call forth a fiend from the Nine Hells to deal with the attackers. He succeeded, and the devil made short work of the murderers, but the fiend did not arrive soon enough to save his loved ones.

Just as the infernal servant ripped apart the last bandit, a patrol from the war college arrived to lend aid. The merchant dismissed the fiend before the soldiers could see it, then tried to conceal the evidence of his dark summons in the mutilated corpses littering his manor, explaining it as a troll attack. The warriors believed his story and took pity on the man for his losses. Captain Janus Storn offered to bring the merchant to Caer Storogal, sensing he could serve the war college well, and Lesterson was in no position to refuse. Because of the good relationship Lesterson had cultivated with the war college, Commander Gufton took an immediate liking to him and installed him as the new chancellor.

Plots and Intrigues: Since coming to the war college, Lesterson has done his best to avoid the succubus and the minor devils she sends to torment him. He does not relish his job, but at least running the stronghold keeps him busy. For all his efforts to avoid the darkness, the fiends are not willing to let him go and at any time could come forth to claim the soul they rightfully own.

Lesterson has proved to be a capable steward and a shrewd negotiator, but he's easily distracted by images he sees in his peripheral vision—shadowy things, sinister and smiling, calling for his return to their filthy embrace. Fiends visit him in the night, filling his dreams with unspeakable visions.

Richard Lesterson	**Level 9 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 400
HP 92; **Bloodied** 46	**Initiative** +7
AC 23, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21	**Perception** +3
Speed 6	

Standard Actions

⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 7 damage.

⊛ **Hellfire** (fire, implement) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + 8 fire damage, and Richard can slide the target up to 3 squares.

✲ **Infernal Conflagration** (fire, implement, zone) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d6 + 3 fire damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of Richard's next turn. Any creature that starts its turn in the zone takes 5 fire damage.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists until the end of Richard's next turn. Roll a d6. On a 6, the burst size increases by 1.

Move Actions

Brimstone Escape (teleportation, zone) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: Close burst 1. The burst creates a lightly obscured zone that lasts until the end of Richard's next turn. He then teleports up to 8 squares.

Skills Arcana +14, Bluff +11, History +14

Str 9 (+3)	**Dex** 16 (+7)	**Wis** 8 (+3)
Con 12 (+5)	**Int** 20 (+9)	**Cha** 14 (+6)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment robes, dagger

The Setting

Two arms of an old, weathered mountain range enclose a valley, trapping clouds. The heavy rainfall in this area makes the land ideal for agriculture. The valley narrows to the west, and the land rises to rolling hills that join the forested slopes. Caer Storogal rises from a high bluff in these hills, protected on three sides by mountains, and boasts a grand view of the land spreading eastward.

Runoff and snowmelt from the peaks brings fresh water to the valley-dwellers. Streams crisscross the lowlands, draining the region into a large lake a few miles beyond Foote. Tunnels riddle the mountains. Some are mineshafts cut by dwarf prospectors long ago. Others are caves, which scouts claim lead deep into the earth, granting access to the Underdark. Most of the tunnels are empty of anything more dangerous than local wildlife. Rangers sometimes return with evidence of orcs, goblins, and trolls.

Seven watchtowers ring the valley. If the sentries posted in one of them spot danger, they light signal fires to warn the citadel. The watchtowers, like the stronghold, are of dwarven make, though time and weather have weakened them, forcing soldiers to split their work between guard duty and maintenance.

Settlers cleared trees from parts of the valley to create farmland, and the moist climate makes the rolling hills suitable for farming and grazing. Caer Storogal encourages cultivation, because it keeps the forest back to give the sentries a clear view should enemies invade. Farmsteads are spread across the rolling countryside, each controlled by one or two families. They mark their boundaries with stones and low slate walls.

The farmers give a portion of their crops to the stronghold in exchange for protection. Many also relinquish a son or a daughter to the stronghold for training and service. The war college enjoys a steady supply of recruits to fill out its ranks. This relationship has endured for two hundred years, and the stronghold's levy is just part of life in the valley.

Where the mountain's arms give way to hills and the great forest beyond stands the village of Foote. For its small size, it is a wild and unwholesome place, fiercely independent and attracting all sorts of undesirables. Caer Storogal tolerates Foote's excesses because the community attracts merchants who in turn supply the valley with finished goods, ore, and materials the settlers cannot produce on their own. Foote attracts students and soldiers alike, luring them into brothels and taverns, feeding their vices and draining away their pay.

Caer Storogal

Caer Storogal's mighty walls, crafted by dwarven hands, are as strong as they were when first raised. In the rare times when the mists part, one can see the fortress from as far away as Foote. The buildings inside the outer wall rise high above, perched on the hilltop.

At any given time, one can find between eighty and one hundred twenty people living in the stronghold, numbers far lower than the war college can accommodate. Warriors and sergeants take rotations guarding the outer towers, so the numbers seem lower because one force is often traveling to relieve another.

Moat and Bridges

The Nerathans diverted several streams into a channel cut around the stronghold to form a wide moat. Heavy rains ensure that there is always water here. Wooden and iron spikes hide just below the surface, threatening to impale horses and invaders alike.

Four wooden bridges, one leading to each gate, cross the moat. Defenders can collapse them by hammering out the pins holding them together. Part of

every soldier's duty is to learn how to take the bridges apart and put them back together again.

A. Towers and Walls

Round turrets form anchors for fifty-foot-tall crenellated walls that act as the war college's first line of defense. Outer walls protect the interior buildings, including the keep. Each wall connects to five walkways stacked on top of each other and connected by ramps. The battlements give archers access to the numerous arrow loops arranged in rows. While an engineer might consider too many openings to be a vulnerability, dwarf artisans shored up the wall with plinths to ensure that even the heaviest battering ram would have a tough time punching through these defenses.

The turrets stand seventy feet tall, with five floors and a cellar in each. They can be entered at various points from the scaffolding through doors so narrow that a warrior in plate armor cannot easily pass. Armored soldiers can enter through a door at ground level or through open archways accessing the turret's upper floors. Caer Storogal has repaired the dwarves' old ballistas and catapults, and all are in working order even if the college lacks the soldiers to use them. Most turrets are home to rats and dust. The interior levels once served as barracks, armories, and storerooms. Some even have kitchens and pantries, making each tower a defensible strongpoint.

A second, interior wall rings the inner structures that claim the hilltop. This wall stands nearly as high as the outer wall and features broad gates to accommodate traffic into and out from the stronghold.

B. Lord's Keep

The Lord's Keep stands at the stronghold's center and was the first structure the Nerathan occupiers built. The building has a stone foundation and wooden walls. It stands sixty feet tall, and two watchtowers emerge from its pointed roof another thirty feet. One is a bell tower used to alert the countryside in case of attack.

The Great Hall fills the first floor; it's here where students and soldiers take their meals. Above the ground floor are council chambers, guest chambers, armories, storerooms, and a few rooms set aside for teaching strategy and tactics.

C. Barracks

A low, long building, constructed from wood and fitted with a steep roof, quarters the stronghold's soldiers. The main floor holds a common room where off-duty warriors can dice, drink, and play cards, a storeroom for stowing gear, and baths and the like. The upper floor is divided into two large rooms, where soldiers can take their rest in bunks arranged in rows.

D. Chapel and Infirmary

Although Caer Storogal is a military outpost, the warriors living here are mindful of the gods, and many offer prayers to them in the wooden chapel attached to the barracks. The ground floor features small shrines to all the gods, each bearing an idol or a symbol and surrounded by candles in the god's colors. The infirmary occupies the upper chambers.

Friar Michael attends to these altars, changing out the candles and clearing offerings. He's a burly man with a thick beard and shaggy black hair. He sees all gods as worthy of veneration. He confides to his friends that he holds the god of beer as the highest authority—a fitting devotion, since he's also the stronghold's brewer.

Friar Michael **Level 6 Brute (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 250

HP 85; **Bloodied** 42 **Initiative** +3
AC 18, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 18 **Perception** +5
Speed 6

Traits

Drunkard
At the start of each of Michael's turns, roll a d6. On a 1 or a 2, Michael is dazed until the start of his next turn. On a 5 or a 6, his melee attacks deal 3d6 extra damage until the start of his next turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Mace** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 4 damage.

Minor Actions

Liquid Fortitude (healing) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: One adjacent ally can spend a healing surge, and it takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Skills Endurance +10, Heal +10

Str 19 (+7)	**Dex** 10 (+3)	**Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 15 (+5)	**Int** 8 (+2)	**Cha** 12 (+4)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment robes, mace

E. Commander's Tower

The commander's tower rises alongside the Lord's Keep and reaches above the walls. Here, the commander and the captains have their offices and residences. A cramped spiral staircase in the center gives access to the floors and can be easily defended if enemies breach the inner walls.

F. Dormitories

The dormitories stand next to the barracks. Slightly smaller, but of similar construction, the dormitories feature a common room, while the upper floor holds bunk-filled rooms for students. Worms share a big chamber, while stripes have smaller and more private rooms.

G. Brewery

Caer Storogal has brewed its own beer since the Nerathan warriors claimed the site. The building holds several large vats, a loft with bins for ingredients, and tools. Here one also finds the stronghold's well.

H. Kitchens

Kept separate from the Lord's Keep in case of fire, this wide building boasts a dozen ovens, a scullery that also doubles as a laundry, cold storage, and pantries.

Arniss Debbler, "the General," is the head cook. He runs a tight operation. Incredibly fat, he has oily, black hair and small, black eyes. Servants fear him, for he has few kind words and always grumbles about something. He might be brusque, but he's good at his job.

I. Storeroom and Garden

The stronghold keeps a small garden to grow herbs, root vegetables, and other supplies to keep itself fed in case of a siege. While the garden is modest, most people living in the stronghold grow plants in pots to make their own contributions toward meeting the community's needs. The storeroom holds gardening tools, racks for drying herbs, and a cellar for storing the harvest.

J. Stables

Caer Storogal's stable is home to some twenty warhorses. These steeds are used to patrol the valley, and also for training purposes in the corral outside the stronghold.

The mistress of horses is Serra Windspeaker, an elf warrior maiden who settled in the region fifty years ago. Many students find themselves distracted by her exotic appearance, but those who have sought to win her affection gain nothing but a broken heart.

Serra Windspeaker — **Level 8 Skirmisher**
Medium fey humanoid, elf — XP 350

HP 83; **Bloodied** 41 — **Initiative** +11
AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20 — **Perception** +13
Speed 7 — Low-light vision

Traits

☼ **Group Awareness** ✦ **Aura** 5
Non-elf allies in the aura gain a +2 racial bonus to Perception checks.

Fey Dancer
When Serra moves at least 3 squares from where she started her turn, she deals 1d6 extra damage and gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of her next turn.

Wild Step
Serra ignores difficult terrain whenever she shifts.

Standard Actions

⨺ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.

⨺ **Swift Blades** ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Serra uses *short sword* twice.

⨺ **Rending Assault** (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Primary Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.
Efffect: Serra shifts up to her speed and makes the secondary attack.
Secondary Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 4 damage.

Triggered Actions

Elven Accuracy ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: Serra makes an attack roll and dislikes the result.
Effect (Free Action): Serra rerolls the triggering attack roll and uses the second result.

Skills Intimidate +11, Nature +15

Str 10 (+4)	**Dex** 21 (+9)	**Wis** 18 (+8)
Con 11 (+4)	**Int** 12 (+5)	**Cha** 14 (+6)

Alignment good — **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, 2 short swords

K. Forge and Armory

The castle produces its own arms and armor, as well as shoes for horses, tools, and anything else that's needed. Ore is expensive and usually comes either from the efforts of the few miners brave enough to explore the old shafts in the mountains or through merchants in Foote. Karl, a human smith, commands five apprentices recruited from the farms to learn the craft. He's advanced in age and has begun thinking about retirement. He will not quit, though, until he finds a worthy successor.

L. Barn

The barn in the eastern bailey holds wagons, hay, and livestock. Recruits maintain the barn, mucking stalls and attending the animals.

M. Grain Silos

Three silos stand opposite the barn, though only one holds grain. Rats are a problem, and recruits often get a chance to use their training as they clear out the nests.

N. Servants' Quarters

Anyone who works in the stronghold but is not a soldier has quarters in the southern bailey. This building is similar to the barracks and the dormitories, having a common room and large rooms shared by its occupants. This building also has a small kitchen, a pantry, and an outdoor garden.

One square = 20 feet
A Towers
B Lord's Keep
C Barracks
D Chapel/Infirmary
E Commander's Tower
F Dormitories
G Brewery
H Kitchens
I Storeroom and Garden
J Stables
K Forge and Armory
L Barn
M Grain Silos
N Servant's Quarters
O Guest Quarters
P Training Yards
Q Archery Range
R Corral
To Foote
N
W
E
S

O. Guest Quarters

Caer Storogal's important visitors usually stay in the Lord's Keep, but their retinues are lodged here, in a small inn nestled against the northern wall in the southern bailey. A common room on the main floor holds tables and booths and a bar where visitors can sample the fortress's brew. Upstairs are small but serviceable guest rooms.

Alber Dunsworth, a young dwarf who was maimed by orcs, runs the inn and tavern, and he's usually the only one here. If he gets more guests than he can manage, he recruits a few servants for help.

P. Training Yards

The northern and western baileys hold the training yards. Here, captains or their sergeants demonstrate proper techniques and then pit students against one another in fighting rings sketched out on the muddy ground. The western bailey is used for advanced training, where instructors match one- or two-stripe students against magical constructs granted to the college fifty years ago by a friendly magician.

Q. Archery Range

Also in the western bailey is the archery range. Targets set against the inner wall can be made fixed or mobile, so that students can first learn the fundamentals and later experience a simulation of actual combat conditions.

R. Corral

Outside the fortress is a fenced-in, muddy field where instructors teach the principles of mounted combat. Students can engage in mock battles, master their riding skills, and learn basic formations.

Adventure Hooks

By 1st level, player characters have already undergone all the training they are likely to need to begin their adventuring careers. As a result, characters aren't likely to seek out Caer Storogal to study under the masters there. Yet there are plenty of interesting ways to incorporate this backdrop into your campaign.

The following adventure hooks can help you draw the player characters into the war college.

Succession War: After the PCs perform some service on behalf of the war college, the dying Commander Gufton names one or more characters as new captains. Later that night, the commander dies and the struggle to name his replacement begins.

Daylight: After an extended foray into the Underdark, the adventurers stumble onto an old mineshaft during their explorations. Fresh air whistles down the tunnel, suggesting an opening to the surface. If the characters follow the wind, they eventually emerge in the mountains within sight of Caer Storogal. The castle promises warmth, supplies, and a few days' respite.

Homecoming: A martial character who trained at Caer Storogal and has been away for a few years decides to return home for a visit only to find dark plots and intrigues abound. Will the PCs lend support to a captain? Will they try to promote one of their own?

Respite: While fighting giants in the mountain's heights, the adventurers are joined by Captain Janus Storn, who offers support to wipe out the troublesome tribe. After completing the mission, Janus invites the characters to Caer Storogal to enjoy some well-deserved downtime. Once at the stronghold, it's clear Janus ought to be next in line to become commander, yet he resists. To ensure the succession, the PCs will have to convince him to take the title and discredit Tytos Long.

Students: You might start a new campaign where all the characters are graduates of the war college. Having earned their stripes, they are required to serve for a year or two as compensation for their training.

Dark Secrets: The chancellor hides his allegiance from the captains. When a student, a captain, or a servant discovers his unholy diversions, he finds himself faced with blackmail. Not long after, the extortionist is found dead, precipitating an investigation into the murder. Was the chancellor guilty, or was someone else behind the killing?

Invasion: Scouts report enemy movement in the mountains, and signs indicate this is the first wave of an invasion force. The characters, either stationed here or visiting, might help shore up defenses and protect the valley from the invaders.

The Missing: During a routine patrol, a captain and twenty soldiers go missing. Two more patrols are sent to find them, but both returned empty-handed. The commander sends out a call for help, hoping local adventurers might be able to sort out the mystery of the vanished warriors. Did the patrol stumble onto some ancient ruin? Did it befall the same fate that claimed the dwarves who once ruled here?

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb has contributed design to or developed nearly two hundred roleplaying game titles for Dungeons & Dragons, *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*, *A Song of Ice and Fire RPG*, *Star Wars RPG*, and the *d20 system*. Some of his more recent work for Wizards of the Coast can be found in *Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*™. He's also a regular contributor to both *Dragon*® and *Dungeon*® magazines. For more information about the author, be sure to check out his website at www.robertjschwalb.com or follow him on Twitter (@rjschwalb).

Starting Over

By Stephen Radney-MacFarland

Illustration by Patrick Thomas Parnell

Every campaign ends. We hope this occurs in your case after your grand plans have blossomed to fruition, but sometimes real-life obstacles interfere with your plans and you're forced to end your campaign prematurely. This month we tackle end-of-the-campaign planning and provide tactics for starting all over again.

While much of this advice assumes that you are already running a campaign, some of it is also good for DMs who are planning to run their first campaigns. If you, like me, have the DMing bug—that is, you are entirely hooked on the idea of running long campaigns for the foreseeable future—the majority of the advice is good to keep in the back of your mind even while you are running your first campaign. If you've not yet found a group, you might want to skip ahead to "Wrangling a New Crew," which provides advice on finding the right players for your game.

When you restart a campaign, it's always best to consider what your players want. With a myriad of products, campaign settings, and campaign tools on the market, and more coming every day, it is easy for a DM to want to run a campaign based on a new product release. It's also easy to be inspired by a new TV show, movie, comic book, or novel and get drawn in by some really great story idea that you saw or read. If you're a DM who leaps from one campaign to another, you can very quickly create fatigue among your players. Most players enjoy playing their characters and want to do so for a reasonably long time. Each game session is another chance for them to breathe new life into their creations and establish a deeper connection with their characters—their powers, abilities, items, motivations, and personalities. When a campaign dies, those characters are effectively retired. Many players who start a new game believe it is imperative to create brand-new characters. Re-creating or re-playing a past character is viewed as "cheating" or, at the least, challenges the verisimilitude of the game. A new campaign also gives players a chance to try out new toys, abilities, and character ideas, all of which are fun, but doing this too much can lead to player dissatisfaction. Ask yourself whether it's worth sacrificing the players' investment in their characters just because you want to move on to something new. Remember, you can always find ways to add new ideas to your existing campaign, and nuking the whole thing because you're distracted by the "new shiny" can create more harm than good.

Knowing When It's Over

There are some very good reasons to end a campaign. Probably the best reason is that you've reached the

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level limit. Now this seems like a no-brainer, but I'm not only talking about the hard level limit of the D&D game. Sure, reaching level 30 seems a fine reason to stop, but not for all groups. With a bit of work and gumption, you can proceed far after level 30. You could even draft new and dreadful powers for PCs on their road to godhood, but that will take a lot of work; nevertheless, once you get a good grasp of the game and your players' preferences, such a post-epic task may be worthwhile.

At the same time, not all campaigns should demand 30 levels to complete. There are many good reasons to end at level 10 or level 20. For those of you in college or in the military, you know that many campaigns wrap up out of necessity at the end of a semester, a year, or a deployment. It also might be wise to plan shorter campaigns if some life-changing events are imminent. Births, job changes, and the likelihood of one or more players moving away in the future can all be reasons to plan shorter campaigns. You might also want to plan a shorter campaign if your group meets irregularly. Going from levels 1 to 30 can take years if your group meets only once a month. The long campaign might seem like a great idea at first, but a lot can change in the course of years. If the storylines or arcs of your campaign have discrete ending points, you can wrap things up quickly when life-changing events happen and not worry about lots of loose ends.

The other main reason to think about running shorter campaigns has to do with personal preference. Many groups, especially more casual groups, shine in the heroic tier but become bogged down at the paragon and epic tiers. Lucky for you, there are a number of newer D&D products aimed at heroic tier play.

Before deciding on the level range of your campaign, listen to your players. If they express concern about wrapping their heads around higher-level characters, the group might be better served by a succession of lower-level campaigns. Play slows down a bit at higher levels anyway, but if it slows to a crawl, you might want to think about wrapping it up and starting anew, either in the same campaign world or in a new setting. If you decide that the right course of action is to wrap up the game quickly, then give the player characters definitive and straightforward goals that resolve plot points and give your players the opportunity to finally take down some of those long-running bad guys who have been a pain in their butts throughout the campaign. It's better for a campaign to end with a climactic battle than to fizzle into loose ends and unfulfilled goals.

You can tell when a campaign has gone off the rails when your players are confused about what to do next or—worse still—apathetic about the adventures you have set out before them. For whatever reason, the players have lost interest in the thrust of the campaign. It's easy to blame them for not paying attention, but it might also be an indicator that you've lost focus. You can struggle to recapture the "glory days" of the campaign, or you can suggest starting over. If you get cheers and excitement at the opportunity to begin anew, don't fight it. Learn from it, ask your players what they liked and didn't like, and keep a stiff upper lip when they give you a litany of reasons why the campaign no longer holds their interest. DMing, like any art, benefits from practice and an honest realization of what you are doing right and wrong.

Learning from the Past

Even the best DM has room for improvement. After each session, whether one of my home campaigns or a game I run at a show, I think back on the events of the game and ruminate on what I did right, what I did wrong, and how I can do better.

This kind of reflection is extremely important when you decide to start over. Assess your last campaign. Which sessions were the most fun for both you and your players? What made them stand out? Was it the type of adventure? Maybe the group gravitates toward dungeon crawls, intense roleplaying, difficult decisions and moral dilemmas, complicated combat encounters, or something else. Now think back to those painful sessions when your players were having a blast but you felt a little off your game. These sessions are usually the most telling when assessing your players' preferred play styles and will give you strong hints about how you can improve your DMing and make the game more enjoyable for them. Do your players enjoy horror and suspense, but you don't feel comfortable running those kinds of adventures? While it is tempting to want to avoid such adventures in your next campaign, you might want to consider rising to the challenge to improve. If your players enjoy it so much, delve into the genre. Read books and blogs, watch movies, and take a look at similarly themed adventures—not only those produced for D&D but other roleplaying games as well—and see what makes them tick. Never be afraid to borrow ideas that inspire you. It's easy to pick up hints from other forms of storytelling.

DMing is thirsty work, especially if you game once a week or more. Often it is enough to look back at what you did well and capitalize on it. If you don't have the time or the inclination to dissect your earlier exploits in the DM's chair, do what you enjoy most, and at the same time avoid the things that turn you off. If you don't like dungeon crawls, don't feature them in your new campaign. Sidestep them whenever possible. This can be hard if you have a group of players that loves them, but sometimes you have to make hard choices in order to juggle DMing on a busy schedule.

Speaking of busy schedules, if you find yourself under the gun, don't be afraid to create or run an entire campaign from canned sources. Many DMs are great at running games but have trouble coming up with fresh and interesting content week after week.

If you find you're one of those DMs, the good news is that there are plenty of adventures (both stand-alone adventures and adventure series) out there, and it doesn't usually take much effort to alter a few details to make an adventure better suit your campaign. While world-building and adventure design can be very satisfying, it's also time-consuming, and using published adventures will not diminish your player's enjoyment of the campaign.

Wrangling a New Crew

Often a campaign has to start over because the gaming group breaks up. Let's hope it's not because the last campaign ended so poorly that your former players don't talk to each other anymore. I've heard stories of such things happening, and if that's the case, you're really going to have to sit down and figure out what went wrong. Usually the break-up happens for a less dramatic reason—you move away, one of your key players has a baby, or what have you. No matter the reasons, you're looking to build a new group.

With the exception of organized play, which has its own goals, dynamics, and rules of decorum, you should never engage in a long-running campaign with people that you don't consider friends. Even the most patient and saintly among us have a hard time spending several hours with people we don't really like that much. Because of this, you should be somewhat choosy about who you game with. This might seem a tad selfish, but it will save your sanity in the end.

So, how do you go about finding out if you like a person? Well, it's like dating, only the objective is to find likable players and fellow gamers instead of a significant other. Play some board games or casual games; go out for drinks, dinner, karaoke (if you're so inclined), or whatever. The last thing you want to do is jump right into a campaign. Marriage rarely works out between complete strangers (no matter what movies about Las Vegas have to say on the subject), and a long-running campaign is like a marriage of sorts, without all that pesky romance.

Making sure that you are comfortable with a potential new player is only the first step. The next step is to make sure all of the players are comfortable with one another. Plan a board game night or a one-shot adventure. Use the opportunity to gauge the potential for personality conflicts. If you think you have a group of players who get along well, host a dinner and set aside some time where you all talk about the campaign and character ideas. Once you've gotten this far, chances are you're locked in.

So how do you find potential new players? The Internet, baby! You can also stop by your local game store and participate in the Dungeons & Dragons Encounters™ program or the D&D Lair Assault program, which are great opportunities to see potential new players "in action" before you invite them into your homebrew campaign. Who knows? You might end up making lifelong friends in the process.

About the Author

Stephen Radney-MacFarland is a game designer living large in the Seattle area. He was a developer for 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons, a content developer for 3rd Edition organized play, and he has taught game design for the past three years. Stephen currently works at Paizo Publishing as a designer for the *Pathfinder* Roleplaying Game, writes "Save My Game," and works on the occasional D&D product. He also runs more games than his wife would prefer.

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